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# AFRICAN JUNGLE LIFE

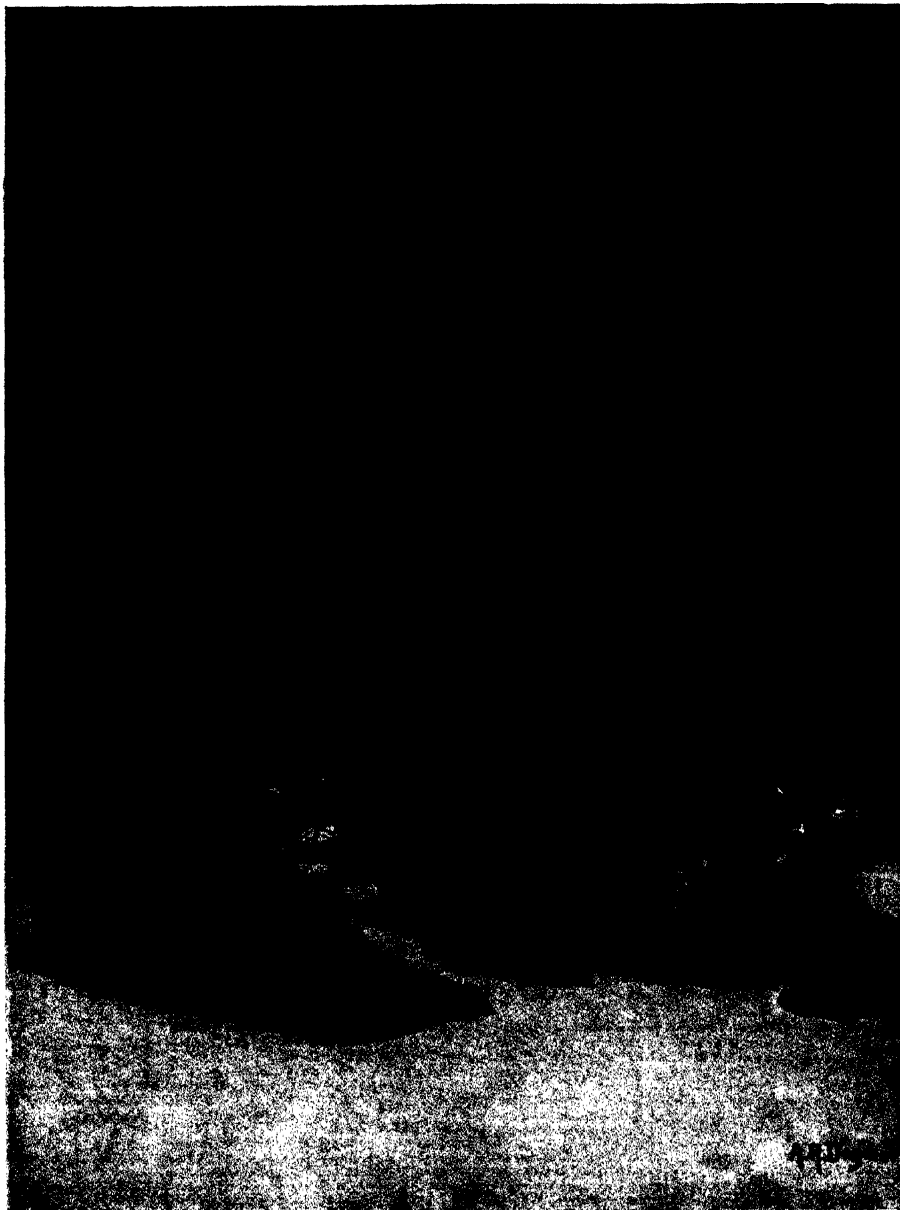


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"WHEN THE CUBS WERE STILL SMALL BALLS OF FUR THEY WERE TAKEN  
OUT . . . AND ALLOWED TO PLAY ON THE SMOOTH GRAVEL SPACE IN  
FRONT OF THE DEN" (P. 122)

# AFRICAN JUNGLE LIFE

BY

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"THE WONDERLAND OF BIG GAME," "THE VAST SUDAN"  
"THE ROMANCE OF THE BEAVER," "THE ROMANCE OF THE CARIBOU," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED  
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1928

**PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN**  
**BY R. & R. CLARK, LIMITED, EDINBURGH**

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## SIMBA, TEMBO AND OTHERS

IN the following pages I have endeavoured to give accounts of the lives of various species of the larger African animals to show, so far as I know, how they live among themselves and to some extent what their feeling is towards man. The names I have used are those by which the animals are called in Swahili, the general language of the country. The incidents related are based on careful personal observations during my work of photographing the animals in their natural surroundings, and though, of necessity, it was not an individual member of a species that supplied all the ideas and facts set forth, the happenings which make up the life story of each animal are those that might naturally have occurred, had one been able to follow the individual instead of watching many different members of a given species. I have tried throughout to avoid exaggeration and to keep as closely as possible to normal conditions. It may be noticed that I have to a great extent ignored what the fiction writer usually delights in—the value of protective colouring and marking of animals. For this

I may be criticised by those who favour the theory, but one is forced, if really honest with oneself and with what is actually observed, to keep to facts as they appear in nature, the greatest of all instructors. To clear myself from the condemnation of those who do not agree with my views and who may think that I have not given sufficient thought to the subject, I might mention that most of my life has been devoted to the study of wild creatures, and that I started out and for several years continued with an absolute conviction that nature provided all animal life with some sort of protective power or form or colour. Experience and close observation have caused me to change my idea, so far as the larger mammals are concerned, and that is all that we need consider in relation to this volume. I am convinced that we know very little, though we talk a lot.<sup>1</sup> The question of the protective value of their colours and markings has been much discussed, and to my mind the cart is usually put before the horse when people say that animals' colours match their surroundings, whereas it seems far more reasonable to suppose that, if the question of protective coloration means anything, so far as the larger creatures are concerned at any rate, the animals would seek of their own accord surroundings which match their colours when they want con-

<sup>1</sup> This refers to a note of reference in the "Twiger" chapter.

cealment. Yet it is doubtful whether this is altogether a sound theory if we look carefully into the question. The leopard is always given as an excellent example of protective markings, its spotted coat being like the flickering sunlight and shadow among the trees. Yet the animal hunts chiefly at night when the value of its colours is not worth considering, and during the day when sleeping it naturally keeps still and consequently would escape notice regardless of its colour. This is proved by elephant and buffalo, both of which are neutral greys ranging from light to almost black, as in the case of the latter. Yet when either of these animals keeps still in a forest or among shaded bushes they are extremely difficult to see in spite of their immense size. If a spotted coat was necessary for the leopard's protection, why should not the elephant and buffalo be equally favoured? The giraffe with its blotched coat is very inconspicuous if the animal is among trees and keeps still, but then so is the impala and the hartebeest, neither of which have markings. Out on the plains zebra, with their distinctive striped coats, are neither more nor less visible than eland and hartebeest, who have plain coats, the former grey to fawn, the latter yellow fawn or even almost orange fawn. There comes the question why animals should need protective colouring: is it to save them from their enemies or to enable them to hunt their prey?

If the former, then why should their enemies be also protected by their colouring? If the latter, why, then, should their prey be equally given a protecting colour, and further, why should nature make it easy for one animal to kill another? The whole question seems to result, if we study animals in their wild state, in a negative solution. Why some creatures should have intricate patterns and others be plain coloured may have had a reason once, but nowadays it is very difficult to see what purpose it serves. If we take the white-tailed (or Virginian) deer of America we have a good example of the weakness of the protective colour theory. During the summer months when the does have their fawns to watch, they turn what is called red, really a bright rufus, which is about as conspicuous as any reasonably quiet colour could be against the intense green foliage. Can anyone argue that this is for protection? The examples of animals in northern countries turning white to match the snow are always used by those who believe in protection. Why, then, does the Arctic hare retain its black eye, which is so very conspicuous against the snow? and if the white is for purposes of concealment from its enemies, how is it that its enemies, such as foxes and stoats, also turn white, and why don't all the hunters do the same? The wolverine, the marten and the fisher keep their dark coats. It is more than likely

that the white coats have something to do with heat-retaining properties and are worn by those animals that spend much of their time in the open. The caribou turn white to a greater or lesser extent, and they are always exposed to the bitter cold. The black bear, who hibernates in a protected place, remains black; so with the beaver and otter, who spend so much time in lodges or burrows. But all these examples have their exceptions and it seems impossible to prove anything definite and convincing. Most of the hunting animals hunt by scent rather than eyesight, so when all is said on the subject of protective coloration there is the futility of such a method of protection so long as the scent of the animal can be followed by the hunter, and the hunter himself gives off scent which warns his possible prey. This is not intended to be a treatise on the subject, but simply to explain briefly some of the reasons for my leaving out of the following stories of animals the supposed reason for their colouring and markings. By abstaining from this I have deliberately abandoned many opportunities for indulging in delightful flights of fancy and imagination which would have been based on quite plausible evidence, but which nevertheless would not be truly in accord with what I believe. My sole object is to give to those who, though interested in wild creatures, have no opportunity of seeing

them in their natural surroundings, some little idea of how the lion, the elephant and others live and what they have to fight against, also so far as I can tell what are the reasons for some of the things they do and which to the casual observer may appear as being without reason. It will be seen that man is probably the greatest enemy known to wild animals. He could, instead, be, and sometimes is, their greatest friend. More knowledge and more sympathy will bring this about, to the greater happiness of the wild creatures and the greater enjoyment of man.

# TEMBO, THE ELEPHANT



## TEMBO, THE ELEPHANT

TEMBO, the elephant, stood beneath the shade of a straggling palm tree. Beyond the occasional flapping of his absurdly large ears he made no movement, and his grey body, spotted with sunlight and shadow, was so still that he seemed more like a great statue than a living creature. Tembo was doing a lot of thinking, for into his life had come suddenly a change of vast importance, and for the future he would have to depend entirely on himself, whereas in the past he had been content to do what he was told and assume no responsibilities.

Six years ago he had been born, not far from where he now stood, in a wooded *donga*,<sup>1</sup> and for some time after his birth he had seen no one but his mother, a mighty beast who bore long curved yellow tusks, and whose one thought was for the safety of her baby, and she watched him day and night with true maternal solicitude. He remembered how, to show her affection, she used to stroke him with her long sensitive trunk; never for a moment was he out of her sight as they

<sup>1</sup> *Donga*, a small valley or shallow ravine.

roamed about the forest while she fed on the succulent leaves of trees and shrubs.

During the early hours of the days, when cold mists lay on the forest-covered mountain, she would seek some secluded clearing to avoid the constant drip, drip, drip from the mist-soaked trees, and then, as the sun burnt its way through and the welcome heat reached the cold ground, she would stand and enjoy its warmth while the baby stood between her fore-legs under her great body, which shaded him from the sun, while, with tiny trunk thrown well back over his head, he enjoyed his breakfast. When the drip from the trees had stopped, the pair would once more seek the deep shade of the forest and wander slowly and cautiously about, avoiding roadways and paths and skirting any openings where there was risk of being seen by other beings. Even when in the densest forest the thought of safety was more important than anything else, and every few minutes the mighty mother would stop feeding and stand absolutely motionless, with her great ears thrown out to catch the slightest sound, and trunk held high to test the air for the least taint of suspicious scent. After a few moments, should no danger be detected, feeding would again begin, for the mother required a vast amount of food to sustain her immense body and provide for her ever-hungry offspring. It was during

these periods of watching that Tembo learned his first lesson, which was to keep absolutely still while his mother listened. If he moved or made the slightest noise, he would receive a gentle smack from his mother's long trunk. If this did not produce the desired effect, he received another and far more vigorous slap, so he soon learned that under no condition must he move until the signal was given.

Several moons passed before the little fellow saw more than a passing glimpse of other elephants. Occasionally his curiosity would be excited by seeing other dwellers of the great forest—delicately made bush-buck, mighty buffalo and screaming baboons—but he was never allowed to mix with any of these. Then came the day when his mother decided to rejoin her former companions, and he was introduced to the herd who, at the time, were feeding on the shores of a beautiful forest-enclosed lake. The herd included some two dozen members of varying ages. Some old cows with half-grown youngsters, some young ones of both sexes and several fair-sized bulls, but there was none so small as Tembo, so he avoided his larger cousins and at all times stayed close to his mother.

Life became more interesting as time went on. There were bathing parties in the lake, or in muddy pools that were hidden in the forest, and he used to stand on the edge, where the water was shallow, and

try to imitate his elders as they sucked up the water with their trunks and sprayed their heads and backs. This was great fun and the cold water was most refreshing; but he wondered why they did not choose the heat of the day rather than the evening, as it would then have been so much more refreshing. It was a long time before he dared roll in the soft mud as the others did, but at last he tried it and found it very much to his liking. Sometimes a dry bath was the order of the day, and then the whole herd would visit some sunlit glade or hillside and dust themselves with bright red earth; and he was amused to see that this would change their colour, so that instead of being grey they were all red. This made them much more easy to see in the forest, where the red was in such strong contrast to the green foliage.

Life was very peaceful in those days. Eating, sleeping and bathing occupied most of the time. Occasionally some excitement was caused when strange creatures were seen. These were men who made much noise and left a trail of most unpleasant odour, which had the effect of frightening even the older members of the herd. Every precaution was taken to avoid coming into contact with these beings, and Tembo learned that if he saw, heard or smelt any of them he must either stand motionless until they had vanished or else move off with the utmost caution

and in complete silence. He followed the example of those that were older than himself without question; they evidently knew more than he did; but still he wondered in his own quiet way why these harmless-looking creatures should be feared. He had never seen them do anything to cause alarm or worry, and they appeared to treat other animals kindly. On more than one occasion he had seen great herds of various coloured humped-back cattle walking in front of the human beings without being hurt or even showing any signs of fear, and once, from the shelter of the forest, he had seen these same much-to-be-feared creatures actually filling mud-made troughs full of water in order that the cattle might drink. It was all rather puzzling; certainly he could *see* no reason to fear them; but then again there were members of the herd to which he belonged who had seen perhaps a hundred rains or more and who, therefore, must be full of knowledge acquired from many and varied experiences. They in their wisdom decreed that man was to be feared above all things, excepting perhaps fire, so that he, who was the smallest and least experienced of the lot, must not question the fact that man must be watched for at all times and be avoided at all cost.

In the course of a short journey from one part of the forest to another Tembo learned a lesson of the

greatest value. He had observed that the herd was invariably led by one or other of the older members, usually a fine old cow who was endowed with a vast store of useful wisdom that had been acquired during her many years of roaming. She had covered many, many hundreds of miles, had seen many and varied conditions, had an intimate knowledge of the country southward beyond even the great snow-covered mountain whose peak was often lost in the clouds and even beyond, and could tell exactly where the best food was to be found and the best water at all times of the year. She stood about eleven feet in height, which is tall for a female, had curiously malformed tusks of great length; the left one was practically straight with a slight upward bend, while the right one curved in until it almost touched the other a short distance back of the point. This made it impossible for her trunk to be pushed forward in the ordinary way, so it had to be pulled upward until clear of the tusks and was then free to move in any direction. The old cow had a peculiar habit of coiling her trunk on the tusks with the end pointing forward, so that she could do sentry work with the least possible effort and catch the scent of any possible enemy without the trouble of holding her trunk aloft.

The trail which the herd was following under the leadership of the cow with the curved tusk was an

old elephant trail that had been in use for countless years. In most parts it was wide enough for two of the big creatures to walk abreast. Suddenly the leader stopped and began examining the ground with her trunk, and Tembo saw her pushing away a lot of smooth earth and dry leaves. Having done this she found a network of fine sticks, which she proceeded to pull up and throw aside. This disclosed a deep pit, large enough to hold an elephant, and at the bottom there were a number of sharp-pointed stakes. Having exposed this source of danger to the full view of all who used the trail, she resumed her way, and Tembo in passing had his first view of a game pit, one of the cruelest and most dastardly of animal traps, and he knew that he must always keep a careful look-out when walking through the forest, especially when following a regular trail.<sup>1</sup>

The next marked change in Tembo's life was due to the coming of the rainy season. Up to then his home had been in the tree-covered mountains, with occasional visits to the open grassy lands which bordered the great forest; but one day there was no

<sup>1</sup> These pits are made by the natives for the catching of all sorts of wild beasts, and though, thanks to the wonderful sagacity of the older elephants, they seldom get caught, the young ones, being less careful, occasionally fall in and die a miserable death. Nowadays the making of a pit is forbidden, and the punishment so severe that the native seldom risks making them. I have found quite a number and have narrowly escaped falling in; and once a companion of mine fell in and by the most remarkable luck was uninjured, though he was found *standing* between two of the sharpened stakes.

sunshine and the sky became dark and overcast, and with it the weather changed and grew very cold. Then followed other days, dark and dismal, when the damp mists hung low and lasted long, and finally the rain fell in torrents, and nowhere could the continual dripping from the trees be avoided.

The herd, which had been restless for many days, decided to move away from the mountain and, under the leadership of the old cow with the curved tusk, left the forest one wet evening and headed towards the great plains which stretched far to the south. They travelled in a long line, little Tembo and his mother in the middle; sometimes they followed paths that were broad and smooth, at other times they went across trackless country, but always they kept the same general direction. Other elephants had been before them, several herds, and where the ground was made soft by the rain the great circular tracks told the story of their passing, and how they had all left the forest because of the dripping of the trees. For some time after Tembo and his party had started, their way took them across more or less open country, hilly and covered with short yellow grass, with here and there scattered clusters of low trees. By way of variety there were tracts of black lava, relics of the days when the whole country was torn by continuous volcanic eruptions and streams of molten lava flowed

down the mountain slopes; but that was in the bygone ages, and now the volcanoes slept peacefully and only the circular craters showed where they had existed.

By the time the sun rose in the distant east the line of elephants had left the wooded mountains far behind them, and later on they reached the plains, which stretched as far as the eye could see to the east, the south and the west. No longer was there any rain, and the country was parched to a grey and yellow colour. Grass became less and less abundant and the almost leafless thorn trees were smaller and smaller. It was a dreary desert on which the sun shone with such intensity, and poor little Tembo, who had never before been subjected to heat, walked on the shady side of his mother and wondered why they had ever left the delicious cool of the forest which had always been his home. He could see nothing attractive in this arid waste. No shade trees under which he could sleep, no succulent leaves to eat, and, above all, no sign of water. Here and there were stretches of flat sun-cracked mud where water had been, but it was evident that there had been none for many, many days. Once or twice he saw herds of zebra, whose strangely striped coats were quite new to him, also a few long-necked gerenuks; and Tembo thought that this meant that water was somewhere to be found. He did not know how little these long-necked gazelles

trouble about water, but he was right about the zebra, who require to drink at regular and frequent intervals. The thought that after all there would be water was cheering, but he was getting very tired; they had been walking for many hours, and with his tiny legs it had been very difficult to keep up with the fast-moving herd. Sometimes his mother would help him along with her trunk, but even then his short legs had to keep moving and the sun was getting so very hot. Hitherto he had followed all that the older members had done with a blind, implicit faith, but now this faith was being rudely shaken, and he became a trifle rebellious and lagged behind; but not for long, for his mother in her anxiety for his safety, and he might fall an easy prey to a lion, gave him several sharp slaps with her trunk. So there was nothing to do but make every effort to keep up as best he might with this apparently endless march. He lost all interest in his surroundings and simply kept on walking, when suddenly he found himself in the shade of a large flat-topped thorn tree. Looking about he saw that they had come to a long line of trees and the herd stopped and grouped themselves about in the welcome shade.

It was wonderful to be out of the intolerable heat of the sun, but still there was no sign of water. However, he went to his mother for some refreshment and

then the poor tired little fellow slept and dreamed of the cool dark forest that he had left. Not until the sun began to sink slowly in the west did the herd bestir themselves and start feeding, and towards evening they left the line of trees and made their way along the sandy river-bed in search of the much-needed water. Tembo followed with his mother, wondering where the water might be, for as far as he could see there was nothing but dry sand which was so hot that it hurt his feet. Till now he had known little else than soft leaf mould which had always been cool and comfortable to walk on, and he wished he had never left that land of happiness. For some distance the old cow elephant led the herd along the dry river-bed of sand and rocks and then they came to a place which was much trampled and in which there were several deep holes, evidently dug quite recently. In the bottom of one of the pits, fully eight feet below the surface, there was a little water, but the others showed only moist sand. Tembo was surprised to see several members of the party start digging and making these holes deeper, and still more surprised when he discovered that they were soon able to satisfy their thirst. His mother took him to one of these deepened holes, and there, kneeling down on the edge, she was able to reach the water with the end of her trunk. This was all very well for her, but

what was he going to do? And he longed for water more than anything in the world, yet it would be quite impossible for him, with his short trunk, to reach more than half-way down, and even then he would probably slip in and not be able to get out again. He stood by his mother and watched with envy as she sucked up the precious fluid, then squirted it into her mouth. He felt that he was being sadly neglected and gave vent to his feelings by squealing in a petulant way. Then to his joy he saw that his mother, having sucked up a supply of water, was getting up, and a moment later she placed her trunk in his mouth and satisfied the thirst that had nearly made him crazy. Twice more she filled her trunk and gave him the contents, to his great relief. By this time the sun had vanished for the day, and the herd scattered about and fed along the belt of trees that bordered the course of the dry river.

The full moon had risen, and by its clear light the elephants tore down branches and continued to eat until it was directly overhead. Then, as though by a prearranged signal, the old cow and the herd started once more on the southward trail and continued until the first glow of dawn, when they arrived at a water-hole which was evidently well known to the inhabitants of the district, for not only were there other elephants, but great numbers of zebra, giraffe and

several kinds of antelope, that had gathered from near and far for their morning drink.

As the sun rose the place presented a truly wonderful scene, and something entirely new for Tembo. Here were animals in their hundreds: elephants of all sizes, great grey beasts with discoloured tusks that nearly touched the ground, medium-sized ones with short straight white tusks, and little ones not much larger than Tembo himself; Grévy's and Grant's zebra, the former with large dark-edged ears and fine stripes, the latter smaller with broad markings; of antelopes, there were dove-coloured oryx with long straight horns and strange black markings on face, sides and legs; long-faced hartebeest, and Grant's gazelles; also a large troop of baboons and many sorts of birds; while on the hill beyond the waterhole stood a herd of giraffe watching the scene but apparently not wishing to drink in such mixed company.

The waterhole was a series of pools, large and small, but very shallow, for this was late in the dry season, and, judging from the number of animals present, it would not be long before the pools would be empty. Tembo and his party joined with the other thirsty creatures and were enjoying a long drink, when in the distance a great cloud of dust filled the air. The giraffe, from their look-out position, were the first to see this. Evidently it was not at all to

their liking, for they moved off and were soon out of sight. The hartebeest, seeing the giraffe go, decided to do a little investigating and galloped off up the hill-side, watched for a few moments and then came back to the hole and gave the alarm. Every animal acted without waste of time, and immediately the waterhole was deserted except by the marabou storks, vultures, guinea fowl and other birds. Tembo and his party moved away from the immediate vicinity of the water and wandered about among the dom palms and thorn trees, where, under the shade, they could watch without much chance of being seen. The dust cloud came nearer and nearer, and with it came the sound of bells and the cries of cattle, and before long the waterhole was occupied by vast numbers of camels, cattle, sheep, goats and donkeys, in charge of men, women and children of the Rendili tribe. The men, who were practically naked, assisted by lightly dressed women, arranged their herds so that there should not be overcrowding at the waterholes. It was a slow task and would without doubt occupy the greater part of the day, so the elephants, after watching for a long time, gave up all hope of further enjoyment of the pools and moved slowly away from the tainted air in search of a safer place in which to spend the remaining hours of the day.

This was the beginning of Tembo's experiences

away from his native home. For a few weeks he was taken about from one waterhole to another; some were in good condition, with abundant water, some only slightly moist, some occupied by natives and their cattle, and again others were quite dry. Food was none too plentiful, for most of the trees were practically leafless and the young shoots of the palms were difficult to find. But at last there came a great change in the conditions. Rain fell daily and in great abundance, and the sandy or rocky river-beds became raging torrents that overflowed their banks, uprooted the trees on either side, and converted the lower land into vast shallow lakes. With the coming of the rain, the country changed as though by magic. Arid wastes gave birth to a wonderful growth of tender green grass and many-coloured flowers. Trees that were leafless to-day were clothed with leaf and flower to-morrow. Food became lavishly abundant, water was to be had everywhere, and Tembo began to enjoy life once more. Even the almost daily showers were really pleasant. The soft rain beat upon his skin and refreshed him; it was not like that terrible drip from the tall forest trees. And then before a second moon had passed the rains ceased and all vegetable life matured, and the wild creatures were well-fed and sleek. The weather, too, was cool, and for some time the sky was more or less clouded over. Gradually

the days became brighter and warmer, until the sun beat down on the land with all its terrific tropical power. It was then that the herd of elephants began to retrace their steps back to their northern home, travelling only by night and resting during the heat of the day in whatever shade could be found. Water was still abundant, so that they could drink whenever they wished. Tembo found the journey far easier than the previous one, and looked forward to getting back to his forest home. He had grown a lot in the past months, and though still dependent on his mother for most of his food, he was quite able to enjoy any tender leaves that he found within reach.

On arriving at the mountain forest he found everything much the same as when he had left. Of course the streams and lakes were more full of water, and all plant life was in the glory of its luxuriant growth after the rainy season, so that good browsing was to be found on all sides. It was indeed a land of peace and plenty, and he revelled in the dark, cool shade and the unlimited food, and, above all, in the seclusion offered by the dense growth of bush and tree.

Life went on with little interruption or excitement for many moons, and he continued to grow and to learn how to take care of himself, as all young creatures of the wilds must do. When the next rains came (known as the "short rains", because they last but a

little time and not much water falls), the herd did not go down to the far-away plains, but spent most of their time on the outskirts of the forest, paying occasional visits to a large crater a few miles away. This was a fairly safe place, with plenty of food. Along the high walls of this crater there lived great numbers of baboons, and on these the elephants relied as sentinels. They are always on the look-out for possible trouble, and by their loud cries give warning of danger to all animals within hearing. Their cries carry a long way, so that everywhere within the crater they could be heard by the keen-eared elephants.

Tembo had always enjoyed sliding down steep banks and hill-sides, but he had never found any place which thrilled him so much as the almost perpendicular sides of the crater wall. It is true there were paths zigzagging down the slopes, but these he considered were made for older animals who, though so much stronger, had their dignity to consider, or their superior weight.

Now it must not be thought that young Tembo was a playful animal. Wild elephants seldom indulge in games, after the manner of most other young animals. They are inclined rather to take their pleasures quietly and in a somewhat sedate manner. But this peculiarity of the species did not prevent

Tembo from enjoying the slides down the grassy slopes from one bend of the path to another, and some of the other members of the herd were still young enough to share this sport with him. Against this form of amusement there was the return journey, and this had little to recommend it. In fact it was extremely hard work, but, strangely enough, elephants, at least the old ones, as a rule do not mind going up steep hills as much as going down, and it is astonishing how easily the great beasts will climb a slope so steep that even a man will have difficulty in getting up.

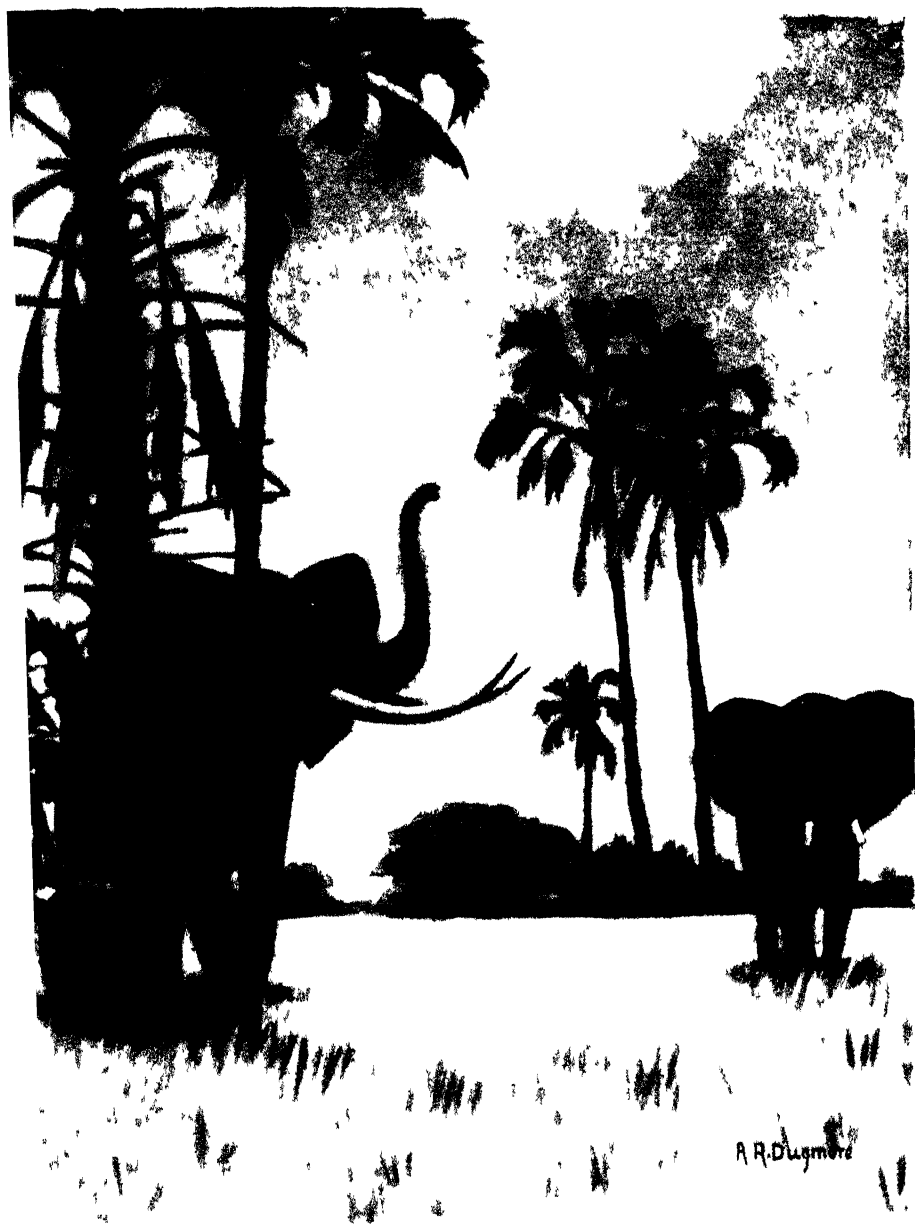
Five of the long rains had passed, that is to say, five years, when Tembo and his mother parted for the first time. She had recently become very restless, and one day started off away from the herd. Tembo, who was now a well-grown animal with short, white tusks, tried to accompany her, but she turned him back and made it quite plain that she wished to be alone. This was difficult to understand, but, being an obedient youngster, he did as he was told and returned to the herd in a somewhat dejected frame of mind. He wondered why his mother had gone and when she would come back, but accepted the situation with the true philosophy of his kind. With eating, sleeping, bathing and keeping alert, he had plenty to do.

It was towards the end of the second moon before he again saw his mother. She appeared one even-

ing accompanied by a tiny baby. Tembo was not demonstrative, but he was glad to see her and immediately made friends with his little sister, and from then on the trio were always together, and life was entirely happy and satisfactory. One day, some time after this, when the herd were down on the plains to avoid the big rains, they came upon the fresh scent of man, and somehow the scent was not quite the same as they had found previously when man had been encountered. It was the first time the younger members of the herd had been in the vicinity of white men, and they were greatly puzzled. The old cows became alarmed and stood on the defensive with ears spread like sails and trunks waving about like gigantic snakes. The younger elephants imitated the older ones for a short time, and then, seeing that nothing happened, laid their ears flat against their bodies, dropped their trunks and returned to the more interesting task of feeding.

Tembo, with his sister and mother, was on the outskirts of the thorn bush and palm scrub and some little distance from the rest of the herd, and though they had not come upon the fear-inspiring trail they had been informed of it by that subtle method with which animals communicate with one another. Having her baby with her made the mother at once keenly alert. Beneath a large cluster of palm trees she stood,

the very picture of majestic alertness, power and anxiety. Her great head held high, framed by the wide spreading ears, trunk upraised and small eyes trying to discover any possible enemy. Close against her legs the baby stood as immovable as her mother, and a few yards away Tembo, fully alert, strained every nerve in his effort to find the cause for the alarm. Suddenly there was a terrific noise, short and sharp, and the air was filled with a strange odour. Tembo, frightened almost to death, looked towards his mother, and she appeared strange to him. Her ears and trunk had dropped and for a moment she swayed, then with a mighty crash she fell, a great quivering mass, and Tembo, wondering what it meant, rushed towards her, regardless of all caution. But by this time she was absolutely and terribly still. In vain he touched her with his trunk, without any response. Then to his surprise several men appeared among the bushes. They were different from anything he had ever seen before. Evidently they were evil creatures and it was not wise to be near them, and so, even though he wished to stay with his fallen mother, in case he might be able to help her, he decided that it was better not to remain. Sadly he made his way back into the thickest part of the bush and from this cover he turned and watched. Unfortunately elephants have but poor eyesight, but he was not far away and was able to see



HIS GREAT HEAD HELD HIGH TRAMPELLED BY THE WIDE SPREADING LEAVES  
TRUNK UPRaised AND SMALL EYES TRYING TO DISCOVER ANY POSSIBLE



more or less what took place. The baby, who had been taught never to leave her mother, stayed, even in the face of the advancing men. With her back pressed tightly against her dead parent she stood bewildered, and scarcely knowing what was happening. Then men came forward with the utmost caution, and one of them, when only a few feet away, quickly threw a long snake-like thing which coiled itself round the baby's neck. In vain did she try to turn to her erstwhile protector for help; but many men rushed forward and Tembo saw them secure his little sister and lead her away. Then after a while, when he thought he would go back to his mother and find out what had happened to her, several men returned and began to hit her head with strange instruments, and she did not move. For a long time this continued, and then more men came and he saw the great body being cut to pieces. Of course he did not know that these men had killed his mother in order to secure the calf alive. They would never have dared to catch it while she was living, as it would have meant death to themselves; all that he knew was that a great calamity had befallen him, and he stayed and watched until at last the men had finished their gruesome task, and then, making sure that the place was clear of enemies, he came slowly back to the wretched scene. There was nothing there that he could recognise as

his mother, and no sign of his sister except her trail, which was confused with many other scents. He followed these invisible signs for some distance until at last in the evening gloom he saw fire and heard strange noises. It was of course the white man's camp, and the native porters were enjoying a great feast. Circling round this evil-smelling place, he got the scent of his young sister, and he came forward some distance towards the blazing fires, wondering whether he could rescue her; but the combination of fire and man was too much for him and his courage gave way. He must perforce leave her to her fate. Evidently she was alive and he felt that he should be content with that assurance and hope that all would go well with her, and that she would be well treated.

So far as he himself was concerned it would be best for him to find the herd and see what they were doing. With this idea in his mind he started off to search for their tracks, which were soon found.

There was little doubt that the sound of shooting combined with the smell of men had alarmed them, and their single-file trail showed that they had started off with every determination to put as much space as possible between themselves and their enemies.

For some distance the trail followed the banks of the river, then it stopped abruptly, which seemed to

show that they must have entered the river in order to throw any possible pursuers off the track. Tembo, with a certain reluctance, entered the water, and was relieved to find that it was only a little over his knees. He had an instinctive fear of crocodiles, such as all animals have, and kept a sharp look-out as he waded across. However, he saw only one small one and reached the opposite bank in safety. There he took up the trail of the herd and discovered that they had headed directly away from the river towards some low-lying hills, which he remembered were a long way off.

He was very lonely and regretted now that he had not joined the others before they had started, but still he kept moving along at a fast walk. Frequently he passed large herds of other animals, zebra and antelope, but they paid no attention to the solitary traveller.

Once a prowling lion came within a short distance of him. In the dim starlight he watched this possible enemy, but the lion, on second thoughts, decided not to risk an attack on an animal that might prove dangerous when the country abounded in those that were easily and safely killed, so he passed on and was soon swallowed up in the night; and the young elephant continued on his way. In the course of his long march he came to where another herd of elephant

had passed, but their scent was strange to him, so after a moment's hesitation he once more took up the trail of his own lot.

All night he walked, stopping only once in a while to pull down some particularly tempting branch and take a light repast. This was done more by force of habit than because he was conscious of being hungry. Animals usually have but one idea at a time, and his thought was to be again with his own kind as soon as possible. Night was showing signs of giving way to day, and the horizon was slowly brightening, when the trail became more noticeably fresh, and Tembo quickened his steps, and just as the sun burst in all its glory above the eastern hills, he came upon the herd feeding among the low scrubby trees. He was greeted with little evidence of interest, but still he felt that it was a relief to be with them, and without more ado he followed their good example and began his morning meal. He realised at last that he was hungry, and he fed without thought of anything else until the sun was high in the sky and the heat was beginning to make itself felt. It was time to seek for a sheltered place, and the old cow who always took charge of the herd led them to a grove of dom palms on the banks of a shallow stream.

It was under the welcome shade of a cluster of these trees that Tembo stood and thought seriously

about the great change that had come into his life. He was motherless, and must depend in the future on the comradeship of the other members of the herd. There was no one who would be particularly anxious about his welfare, and he must learn to look after himself to the best of his ability. Having come to this wise conclusion, he slept the restless, alert sleep of the wild. He knew that one or other of the older members would be on duty as sentry at all times, and even though this gave him a certain sense of security, he opened an eye occasionally and looked about and swung his trunk around to make sure that there were no dangerous odours. Hard-biting flies disturbed his sleep at times, and he flapped his large ears and drove them away.

He did not, of course, realise how fortunate he was in being provided by nature with ears of such generous dimensions.<sup>1</sup> For not only were they most admirable “fly swatters”, but they were useful as fans when the weather was unduly hot. Above all, they were most marvellous “receivers”. When spread out at right angles to the body, they would detect even the slightest sound. As the elephant’s eyesight is very deficient, it is all the more necessary that, for safety’s sake, he shall have extra good ears and a trunk-nose that

<sup>1</sup> The African elephant is conspicuously different from his Indian cousin, the most noticeable features being the much larger ears, the receding brow and the fact that both males and females usually carry tusks.—AUTHOR.

is capable of discovering the slightest scent at an incredible distance.

When the heat of the day had abated, the elephants entered the shallow river, and, having refreshed themselves with a bath and a drink, they started feeding, tearing down fair-sized trees and breaking the branches of those that were too large to uproot, and making the place look as though it had been struck by a tornado. Slowly they wandered about, laying waste in their path. It seemed to Tembo that they were feeding with particular energy, and later, towards midnight, he discovered the reason when the leader headed northward with the others following. They were returning to their forest home, and he was glad, for there he had never heard those never-to-be-forgotten sharp noises which destroyed in such a strange and sudden way.

Several years passed by without anything remarkable happening. The long and the short rains marked the passage of time and regulated the movements of the elephant. Always there were the plains during the wet season and the forest for the dry.

Tembo continued to grow, and he now possessed quite a presentable pair of tusks. The herd had increased in numbers, for several babies had been born, and there had been no casualties. The life was peaceful and orderly, until one day, while the herd

was feeding near the wide trail that led to the lake, the clean forest air was suddenly polluted by the scent of white men. Instantly every elephant, no matter where he was, stood absolutely still, several with raised trunks and nearly all with ears outspread. There were strange sounds not far away, such as Tembo remembered hearing on that memorable day when his mother was killed. As he stood motionless, but keenly alert, not more than five or six lengths from the open trail, he saw the men coming along, and they were utterly unsuspecting of the presence of the elephants; and he wondered whether the leader or one of the older bulls would make an attack; probably not, for he had been taught that trouble must be avoided as much as possible. The men came closer and closer, four whites, followed by a line of black porters, who were all heavily loaded.

The *safari* passed by in safety, and as soon as they had disappeared, Tembo received a signal to move back into the forest quietly, and so within a few seconds and without the slightest sound the herd disappeared into the dark shade of the trees. They did not, however, go far, and for what seemed a long time they remained completely quiet. Tembo was glad when once more the signal was given to resume feeding. But the meal was destined to be a short one, for suddenly the wonderful stillness was broken by

a number of sharp noises, and a moment later, with a deafening crashing of bush, a large herd of buffalo rushed past in terrified haste. The last one of the maddened lot was unable to keep up the speed set by the others; every step seemed to be made with difficulty, and Tembo for the second time in his life smelt the fearful scent of blood, and he knew that the enemy was in their midst.

It was all too evident to his developing mind that those sharp noises were intimately associated with death and white men. The wounded buffalo followed his companions with ever-decreasing speed. Twice Tembo saw him fall, but each time he managed to scramble to his feet.

The herd of elephant, realising that danger was about, followed the buffalo, but somewhat to one side. Thanks to this, they caught sight of the white hunters, with their gun-bearers following the blood-flecked trail. They were proceeding with the utmost caution, for they knew very well what danger there is in coming on a wounded buffalo. It was then that, for some strange reason, the older elephants suddenly let forth a series of loud, shrill screams that wakened the echoes of the forest. The men stopped, terror-stricken, for they could not see the great grey beasts in the thick foliage. Their interest in the wounded buffalo seemed to vanish, and they assumed a defensive instead of an

offensive attitude. Being hunted is quite different from doing the hunting, and the sound of trumpeting elephants, unseen but at close quarters and in thick cover, is apt to strike terror into the heart of even the most intrepid of hunters. Having expressed their feelings in this somewhat vigorous manner, the elephants remained quiet and were content to watch events. In the herd there was one old cow with a very small baby, and this cow was seized with a determination to scatter the men and their guns. She communicated this resolve to those who were near her, and the whole lot charged through the forest, flattening out small trees and shrubs like grass, and passing the wretched sportsmen within a few feet. They were much too surprised and frightened even to think of careful shooting, though several shots were loosed off and went wild among the trees. The elephants, having continued their rush until they were out of sight, stopped and again trumpeted. This was more than the white men could stand. Another one of those mad charges might prove disastrous, so they lost no time in beating a hasty and not over-dignified retreat.

This was the beginning of a period of constant alarm for the elephant herd. Wherever they went they were almost certain to come upon the scent, new or old, of men, so that they scarcely dared to visit

their favourite places. On more than one occasion they almost ran foul of these disturbers of their peaceful forest home, and it was only by keeping a constant and even more than usually alert look-out that trouble was avoided; and instead of straggling about when feeding, they now kept closer together for mutual protection and avoided the more open pathways and glades. In the dense forest there was far less danger of a surprise meeting, for not only were they less conspicuous, but the eddying breezes were in themselves a good safeguard against men coming on them unawares. Then, too, white men are noisy creatures, and they can usually be heard making their way through the thick underbrush long before they are in dangerous proximity. Of course it would have been quite easy to leave this particular district and go to some other place where there were no white men to trouble them, but, being elephants, they were loth to abandon their own range. Only when forced to do so would they move on, and they waited patiently in the hope that their enemies would go elsewhere and leave them in undisturbed possession of their own forest.

It was not long before their hopes were realised and they had the satisfaction one fine morning of seeing the long line of porters, headed by the white men, march away along the broad trail from the lake.

After this life became normal once more; they could feed where and when they wished, enjoy their dust "baths", and revel in the delicious coolness of the lake or mountain pools, with little fear of being disturbed. But their period of security was short-lived. Scarcely had a moon passed since they had settled down again to their care-free life than once more the forest was invaded by men, both white and black.

The elephants had been feeding late one afternoon in an open stretch of forest when the scent of smoke drifted among the trees. Smoke meant men, and the herd was immediately alarmed and all the members gathered together with trunks upraised and ears spread out. For a long time they stood thus, trying to discover where the smell came from. Then slowly the older members, with the old curved-tusk cow leading, moved up-wind. The others followed, all walking with the greatest care so that not a sound was made. With frequent stops they continued, and the smell of smoke became more and more pronounced, and with it came the hated scent of man, both white and black. For an hour or more the herd of mighty beasts moved forward, decreasing their speed as the odours became more pronounced. Tembo wondered why they did not go away from the source of danger instead of deliberately seeking it. He did not realise

how important it is for the leader of a herd to know exactly what danger threatens and where it is. Animals with the keen intelligence of the elephant, which have suffered persecution during countless ages, develop a regular system of self-protection more intricate than we, with our slight understanding of the ways of wild creatures, can appreciate. To them knowledge is power—power to guard against danger; and the wise old cow with the curved tusk determined to find out what was the meaning of this new invasion. It is true she might have come alone to carry out the investigation, but then there was a chance that conditions might arise which would have made it impossible for her to return to the herd, therefore separation was undesirable.

After a time they came to where there was an opening in the forest; the ground was more or less clear of undergrowth, and scattered about were large red-trunked trees, from whose branches silvery grey moss hung in long graceful festoons that moved about in the gentle breeze like things alive. Beneath these great shade-giving trees were many men busily engaged in erecting tents, sorting out cases, gathering fire-wood which lay strewn on the ground where the elephants had torn down branches to secure the tender leaves; and there was all the hustle and bustle that goes with the making of a camp. Some men,

carrying large tins, were on their way to a near-by waterhole where Tembo and his herd were accustomed to go for a cool drink. To the elephants who were watching this scene of animation the sight spelt trouble, and they wondered whether after all it would not be wiser to seek some more distant part of the forest where white men would not come. They decided to wait and see what developed, for perhaps these men were not hunters, but engaged in some more peaceful pursuit. In the meantime they withdrew without having made their presence known, and continued their interrupted meal in the cool of the evening.

Two days passed, and there was no sound of shooting and, except for the scent of man, all was peace and quiet. Not even did the sound of wood-cutting disturb the wonderful silence of the forest-covered mountain. Then late one afternoon the herd, in making their way among the trees towards a glen where they intended to have a dust-bath, detected the faint scent of man. They stopped for a long time and endeavoured to discover whence it came. No sound save the screaming of a troop of ill-natured baboons broke the all-pervading stillness. The trail was then examined, but that revealed nothing of a suspicious nature. Apparently the danger, if danger there was, must be nearer the dusting glade, so, with the utmost caution, they moved forward, as soundless

as ghosts in spite of their gigantic size and weight. Not a twig was broken by their great cushioned feet; branches that overhung the path were deftly lifted on tusks or trunks and slid over their heads and down their backs. Then again on a gentle current of air came that dreaded scent, and it was most unmistakably that of white man. It seemed almost unbelievable, for there was no sound such as men usually make even when moving most carefully. The slight breeze was shifty, at one time coming from the open sunlit glade and then suddenly swinging round, first one way and then another. Under the conditions the leader of the herd decided to make the advance in a curved line and immediately the intelligent creatures deployed, obeying the silent signal, still slowly and without a sound. All had their trunks raised and ears spread, the very picture of alertness. In the middle of the line and somewhat behind was the cow that had a small calf, in the position of greatest safety. Three or four feet at a time this strange line moved, till at last they were but a few yards from the open glade, on the side of which were several large trees whose massive trunks were mud-smeared and smooth from the frequent rubbings of countless elephant. Against one of these trees a tangle of bushes blocked the path on which the cow with the curved tusk was standing. Here the human scent was strong for

one moment and the next it vanished completely in a most bewildering way. In vain did the old cow point her raised trunk in all directions. In vain did she extend her great torn ears from side to side. She knew absolutely that there was something wrong, but what or where she could not discover. To go farther ahead she did not dare as it would mean breaking noisily through the tangle of bush which was, she believed, new to the place and therefore a suspicious sign; and besides this there was the dislike to going into the open of the glade, as she would be a conspicuous object to any enemy that might be lurking in the vicinity. All things considered she found herself in a quandary, and for a long time could not make up her mind what to do. At last she decided that the danger, though not to be found, was somewhere near by and it would be best to retreat. This she did, and with her went the rest of the suspicious herd.

If it was a relief to them to get clear of the elusive human scent, it was far more of a relief to the man hidden in the tangle of bushes against the rubbing tree. He was there with a harmless camera, hoping for an opportunity to photograph elephants in the well-lighted glade when they came to dust themselves according to their custom. But he had not counted on the animals coming behind him, and had endured a quarter of an hour of blood-curdling agony while the

great cow was standing almost on top of him. Each moment he expected she would take the fatal step forward and he would end his career in the form of a pancake beneath her mighty foot.<sup>1</sup> Having retired to the security of the dense forest, the elephants waited and listened for a long time, but without hearing anything; and later on the same evening, shortly before the sun dropped behind the tree line, they encountered again the fearful scent when on their way across a gully. This time they caught sight of a man armed with a strange-looking weapon, apparently something to be avoided at all cost, so they turned back and waited till night had fallen before again venturing out into the open for a drink and bathe in their favourite pool. Having refreshed themselves, they commenced feeding in the direction of the camp, as they were anxious to find out what was going on there. In the darkness they were less afraid than in daylight and consequently far less cautious, so they tore down large branches and small trees and fed in a noisy manner until within a short distance of the camp fires. The noise of their feeding had caused a certain amount of consternation among the men in the camp. There was the chance that they would charge, and this was not a pleasant thought. In the glow of

<sup>1</sup> This incident which occurred to the Author is given—from the man's point of view—in his book *The Wonderland of Big Game*.

the heaped-up fires the men stood or squatted about and watched. It was a wonderful picture in the moonlight, whose cold silver colour made such a beautiful contrast to the red glow of the fire. This glow was reflected on the naked bodies of the natives so that they looked like burnished copper, and on the moss-festooned trees, and gave an effect unreal in its beauty. The elephants, however, were not there to admire the scene. They wanted only to find out whether there was any scent of blood, but the night wind carried only the mixed odour of men and fire. Reassured by this, they turned slightly to one side and once more commenced feeding; and as the sounds of the rending of branches died away in the forest the men made themselves comfortable for the night, leaving only the sentry on duty; and he made sure that the fires burned brightly, for not only were the elephants to be considered, but the frequent roars of lions, which echoed through the forest, would sometimes come close enough to make him anxious to take every possible precaution.

The elephants had come to the conclusion that no harm would come to them from these men and gradually they resumed their normal habits. Several times they were disturbed at the waterhole by porters coming for the camp supplies, but in no case were they molested by these noisy, laughing natives.

Tembo was glad that it had been decided not to leave their regular haunts, for he was happy here as there was everything that he wanted.

One morning the whole herd was feeding towards the large lake in the forest; a heavy mist lay on the mountain so that nothing could be seen farther than a few yards. Gradually the white mist lifted and was melted by the rising sun. There was no wind, and soon the heat became so oppressive that the elephants determined to indulge in a bath, very much to the delight of Tembo, who enjoyed nothing more than to stand in the cool water and spray himself to his heart's content. On the farther side of the lake a large herd of buffalo had come out of the forest and were taking their morning drink. From the high rocky cliffs on the west of the lake baboons were indulging in their customary hymn of hate, as though warning all creatures to keep away as they were coming down to the water; a small family of handsome water-buck were feeding along the shore, and in the lake were ducks, storks and herons, both white and blue. The scene was typical of this part of Africa, beautiful, peaceful and full of interest.

The elephants were standing in the deep water so that the smaller ones showed little more than their backs above the surface, when suddenly an alarm was sounded by a troop of baboons that had approached

the edge of the forest and had been watching the surroundings to see that all was safe before venturing out in the open. Their harsh screams startled the elephants and they immediately made their way towards the shore. Tembo was much disgusted at being interrupted before he had half finished his bath, and it was such a wonderful bath. He was the last to reach the shore where the others stood about in the soft foot-marked mud looking every way in their effort to discover the cause of the alarm. The baboons, having started trouble, had vanished among the trees where their disagreeable noises could still be heard. For some time there was nothing to show that any enemy was about. Then, with the gently rising breeze, came the scent of human beings, and the elephants were puzzled as to which way to retreat. The breeze was blowing from the forest to where they stood, so any move in that direction was dangerous. Tembo, who was comparatively young, had better eyesight than the older members of the herd, and he noticed something moving among the bushes. Filled with curiosity, he started to investigate at closer quarters, but, before he had proceeded more than a few steps, the moving objects appeared from among the bushes, and they were men. This was enough for him, and without more ado he made off at his best speed along the shore line, and with him went the

others with ears flat against their sides and trunks either hanging loosely and swinging with each stride or curled under their chins, while the man who had unintentionally disturbed them turned the handle of his cinema camera and so secured photographs of the mighty creatures.

Several times during the days that followed, Tembo and his companions came upon the strange hunters who did not shoot without suffering any harm, with the result that they even relaxed their vigilance to a certain degree. This proved to be unfortunate, for it made them look on man, to some extent, in a new light; as things to be avoided, perhaps, but not as objects of extreme danger.

It so happened that about this time another and quite different party of hunters came to the neighbourhood. They made their camp not far from the large lake, and one morning while the elephants were feeding *among the trees close to the main trail* they got the scent of man. Believing that their friends the harmless hunters were about, they were not particularly alarmed, but, with the ordinary idea of caution, they moved a little farther into the bush, and some of them continued feeding. Tembo, who was near the old cow with the curved tusk, saw that she was becoming suspicious. Up went her great snake-like trunk to test the scent, while she watched the party

of men who were approaching cautiously along the open trail. The rest of the herd, seeing their leader's attitude, accepted it as a command to cease feeding and stand absolutely still. Apparently the hunters had either seen or heard the elephants, for they stopped and peered through the forest, and in low voices consulted with one another. A moment later the old cow gave the order to retreat, and the great beasts moved back without making a sound. Having gone some distance, the leader stopped for a moment and listened intently. Then, while the others continued their way slowly, she moved to one side and returned, very cautiously, to watch the trail. It was not long before she saw the men creeping along, following the spoor of the herd, and keeping what they thought was a careful look-out. This was enough for the old cow; she decided that as they were being followed it meant danger, and she lost no time in rejoining her companions, when, with increased speed and still in silence, they all continued to put as much distance as possible between themselves and their pursuers. At first they kept on in a straight line, then, turning, they made a large circle with the idea of getting behind the enemy. It happened that among the men was one who knew something of the ways of elephant, and he, with one of the sportsmen, turned back on the trail and took up a position in a place where,

owing to the thinness of the undergrowth, he could see more or less clearly for a distance of perhaps a hundred yards in all directions.

The two white men and their gun-bearers stood close together near a large tree, and as they made no movement they were difficult to see, and there was no wind to carry their scent to the approaching elephants. The old cow was in the lead, next to her was Tembo, always inquisitive and anxious to see all that went on; close to him was the largest bull, who carried a pair of rather long tusks; they made a good show, but were not very heavy. The rest of the herd followed in a fairly compact line. Little thinking that the party of hunters had divided, and that while some had continued on the trail others had remained behind, the herd came on, quite believing themselves safe, but actually into the very jaws of death. Suddenly the air became tainted with the man-scent and the herd stopped in its stride, alarmed and mystified, hesitated for a few seconds, and as they turned to go back, the perfect quiet of the forest was broken by loud reports as two rifles were fired almost simultaneously. Both shots struck the bull who had the large tusks. Stunned for the moment, the great beast staggered; then came the feeling of acute pain and with it the desire to rush at the men who had attacked without provocation, and he lunged forward, almost blinded by the pain in his

head. Consternation seized the herd, and they rushed first one way and then another; some of them screamed with terror and anger. Seeing the injured bull rushing forward, several others joined with him, and together they charged, crashing bushes and small trees and making a most terrifying din; added to this was the sharp noise of rifles being fired in rapid succession by the panic-stricken men. Several shots struck the infuriated elephants and added to their maddened terror. One of the gun-bearers was seen and immediately attacked by the cow with the curved tusk, but he managed to jump quickly to one side and so avoided the charge. Tembo, however, following closely behind his leader, struck the wretched man with his short tusks and threw him down. Everything was happening with such speed that in the confusion it was difficult to know what actually occurred.

The elephants, though keen on battle, were even more anxious for their own safety, and so, instead of pursuing the attack, which must have ended fatally for the men, rushed on, anxious only to gain the safety of the dense forest. The shooting ceased and once more there was quiet. It was then that the wounded elephant, after the terrific excitement had passed, began to show signs of weakness, and he seemed anxious to stop and rest in a clump of thick brush. But the old cow would have none of this. At all costs he

must keep on until he was safe from his enemies. Two of them took up positions on either side of the injured beast, placed their heads back of his great ears, their tusks under his to keep his head up and their powerful trunks around his head as best they could, and in this way helped him along, straining their great muscles in their efforts to keep him moving. Tembo and another got behind and pushed; the others took up various positions as scouts or bodyguards, and so the sad procession moved forward for a mile or more, when they were joined by the rest of the herd. But the wounded bull was failing rapidly; even with the help of the mighty cows his steps became more and more feeble, until at last he could go no farther. The cows could no longer hold him up, and the splendid creature sank slowly to the ground, a pathetic picture of might destroyed. The herd stayed round him, anxious to help, but powerless to do so. The day of disaster was drawing to a close. The forest trees showed dark against the golden sky, and with the passing of the golden light the elephant ceased to breathe, and he went to join those countless thousands of his kind in the unknown spirit-world of animals. The rest of the herd remained close by to the end, and then moved off into the mysterious shadow of the forest and satisfied their hunger, for many hours had passed since their last meal.

The following morning the herd gathered together and decided that this mountain fastness was no longer safe; a new country must be found, if possible one where their lives would be safe from the sound of death-dealing bullets; and that same evening, when the sun had set, the herd left their forest home, and in single file marched along with long swift strides across the arid plains in a southerly direction. Two days later they reached their destination a hundred miles away—a vast swamp of tall elephant grass with flat-topped thorn trees scattered along the outskirts. There were sandy reaches of a river-bed which was full only during the rains and now contained pools of various sizes in which the herd could bathe and drink. In these pools great pink-eyed hippopotamus lived their quiet, unexciting lives, far away from the haunts of men, for the country about was a dreary waterless waste, unfit for human life.

Tembo was not much impressed by his new surroundings; he found it hot and uninteresting and wished himself back again in the wonderful forest. But being of a philosophical nature, he made the best of things and tried to adapt himself to the new conditions.

There were other elephants in the neighbourhood and occasionally the herds would come together to feed or rest. Tembo noted the fact that among the

new lot there were some very old bulls with tusks of immense size, far larger than any possessed by his own herd. These old monsters did not usually mix much with the others, except when feeding; at other times they kept very much to themselves, but always within sound of the herd in case of any alarm being given. They seemed to realise that the cows were more alert and would be quicker to scent danger.

Unfortunately news of the whereabouts of these fine tuskers had been carried to where the white men lived, and before Tembo and his herd had been in the district more than a month a party of hunters made their way towards the swamp, keen on obtaining the much-coveted ivory, for in these days bulls carrying large tusks are rare and the wretched beasts are pursued relentlessly. Go where they will they are followed, and only in the game reserves can they feel comparatively safe; for even in these sanctuaries poachers may risk breaking the law and hunt them; and again there is always danger of the native with his silent poisoned arrow. He can kill with little chance of being caught in the limitless forests. The large bulls, seven in number, did not belong to this vicinity. In the hope of finding safety they had recently come there from a district far away to the west, where they had been hunted until four of their number had paid the penalty for bearing large tusks.

One day when the whole herd was resting during the noon heat under some scattered thorn trees they were discovered by the recently arrived enemy. These men, thinking themselves wise in the ways of elephant hunting, stalked their quarry with skill and patience and worked up-wind to prevent their presence being detected by the sentries. The cows and younger ones had cleverly arranged themselves so that anyone approaching in this direction would meet them before coming to the large bulls. When the men finally came to within sixty or seventy yards of where the great grey backs of the nearer members of the herd showed above the vegetation, they stopped in the cover of some low bushes and were disappointed to discover, after a careful examination, that only cows and bulls with small tusks were within range, and that the large ones were still two hundred yards or more away. To make matters worse, there was apparently no way of getting to them without alarming the others, and this would be dangerous.

After holding a council of war, they decided to stay in the cover and await developments. For several hours they remained in their position waiting patiently for the elephants to move. Then at last their hopes were realised, and the nearer part of the herd began to wander about in search of food; but, unfortunately for the men, the big cow with the curved tusk took

it into her wise old head to stroll down-wind in order to make sure that the coast was clear. She passed not far from the place where the men, alarmed at this strategic move, were wondering what to do: if they left their cover and went back they might lose their hope of getting near to the big tuskers, while if they stayed there they would run a very good chance of being discovered, with what might be disastrous results. Before they had time to make up their minds the opportunity for moving back had passed, as the old cow had wheeled round, and she stood there among the yellow grass and low thorn bushes with her trunk high above her head. That she had scented her enemy there was not the slightest doubt; her attitude alone declared it. A moment later she trumpeted, one shrill blast, then she rushed forward to join the rest of the herd. They, having received the alarm, had already begun to move slowly against the wind, and as soon as their leader joined them they set off at a rapid pace. The men had been outwitted, and though for several hours they followed the well-defined trail of the combined herds, they did not see them again, and they returned to their camp utterly disgusted with what they considered their bad luck, and each one blaming the other for the failure of their plans.

Tembo's herd had not been in the neighbourhood

long enough to have formed an attachment for it. They were, rather, wanderers in search of a home, and this place did not fulfil their ideas of what a peaceful home should be. So after going for some miles with the other herd they separated and continued in a south-westerly direction towards the great mountain whose summit was always a glistening peak of snow. Sometimes far above the clouds like a lofty island it showed clear and beautiful against the sky, and sometimes it was hidden from sight by masses of silvery clouds.

At one time in her life the old cow with the curved tusk had lived on the forest-covered slopes of this mountain, but that was long, long ago, before the coming of the white man, when the country was inhabited only by the Kikuyu who lived in the rich forest region and the wandering Samburu Massai whose herds of cattle followed the good grazing according to the seasons. Beyond these there were the strange Wanderobo, whose home was the forest. They were hunters who, with an almost uncanny knowledge of the ways of wild beasts, killed for food. With the silence of the leopard they could creep through the tangled jungle and fire their silent poisoned arrow with such fatal effect that few animals ever recovered from the tiny wounds which seemed so insignificant and were so deadly, more so even than the wounds

made by the loud-mouthed rifles which in recent years had so frequently disturbed the peace of the wilds.

Tembo with the rest of the herd followed the leading cow across the undulating plains for many hours in the direction of the sinking sun, not stopping to feed until the land was in darkness, for then only did the leader consider they were safe from pursuit. The place chosen for the evening meal was a thickly wooded valley through which a small stream made its way beneath the shelter of the trees and finally lost itself in the bare plains, after the manner of so many of the African rivers.

For several hours the business of feeding was carried on with zeal, but about midnight the signal was given, and once more the mighty beasts resumed their journey. As they proceeded, the country became more and more broken, yet the path taken by the wise old cow avoided steep places and wound its way among the hills, always following the easiest gradients. Probably no animal has so marked an ability as the elephant for making trails as level as the nature of the country will allow, and it is often said by those who have lived in elephant country that man can do no better in selecting roadways than by following the well-marked trails of these intelligent creatures; their paths are so well beaten down and smoothed by the

great feet that a bicycle can be ridden along them with comfort.

With the rising of the sun the herd came to a long stretch of dense forest, and here they rested and fed throughout the day, starting once again on their march with the coming of darkness and continuing until daylight, by which time they had arrived at the lower slopes of the great mountain whose snow-capped summit, so far above, was painted gold by the rising sun. Tembo was much alarmed by the fact that this neighbourhood appeared to be the home of many people; everywhere there were well-defined roads and paths, evidently not made by animals, for all were contaminated by the scent of man. He wondered why the old cow had led them to such a place, which must surely be full of danger. The sloping country was in parts covered with thick, high scrub, with here and there scattered groups of large trees, outposts of the great forest above, which stretched even to the clouds that encircled the mountain, and, like a wreath, divided the rocky peaks from the home of the big trees. Tembo, with his poor eyesight, saw nothing but what was within a short distance, and beyond that all was an ill-defined blur; the immediate foreground proved of interest, as it represented food in unlimited quantity. After the long night's march food was more important than

anything else, and he was glad, therefore, when the leader took them all into a place some little distance from any human roadways and gave the signal to stop and feed. Many times the unpleasant scent of man made its invisible way among the bushes, but, strange to say, the old cow paid but little attention to it. The reason for this behaviour was that in former years she had lived in this vicinity and had found that the people were not hunters, and, except on rare occasions, they did not molest the elephant, as, being agriculturists, they were content to live chiefly on fruit and maize.

The day passed in peace and comfort, and Tembo came to the conclusion this country was very much to his liking, and asked nothing better than to be allowed to remain here. With the coming of night he was disgusted to find that they were to move once more. He was surprised to see that instead of keeping to the protection of the thick bush they were to follow one of the many man-made roads. This seemed to his way of thinking quite an unnecessary risk. However, there was nothing to do but follow with the rest of the herd and hope for the best. For some distance the road wound its way steadily up the gradual slope of the hill; at first through a tangle of bushes and trees, but later the bushes gave place to regular forest where the trees were of great size, and many of them covered with strange vines such as

Tembo had never seen before. The trees, too, were for the most part different from those he had known in his more northerly home. After a few hours' march they came to a clearing in the forest where most of the trees and bushes had been cut down, and in their place was tall reed-like vegetation, even in height and giving forth a most alluring scent. Evidently it was good food, and when the wise old cow turned from the red earth road and led the way into this inviting spot, Tembo lost no time in sampling the new kind of grass. Twisting his long flexible trunk round several green-leaved stems, he pulled them up and conveyed them to his mouth, and the result was completely satisfactory. It was maize, and he decided that he had never tasted anything quite so good; he decided also that the old cow with the curved tusk was wiser even than he had believed her to be, and he determined that in future he would never question the wisdom of her leadership. As he devoured the succulent stems and rich, creamy, half-ripe maize, he perhaps wondered why she had never thought before of bringing the herd to this wonderful land; and as he wondered he continued to enjoy what the gods and man had given him.

For an hour or more the stillness of the moonlit night was broken by the crackling of corn-stalks and the steady, satisfied munching by many teeth of the

delectable food. The clearing was all too small from the elephants' point of view, and before long the last corn-stalk had vanished, and the hungry beasts were still far from satisfied. The feast, so far as it went, was excellent, but it had not lasted long enough. When the old cow took to the road once more, Tembo kept very close to her, for he was confident that in her wisdom she would know that he wanted more of such fodder and would surely take him to where it might be found. But the old cow was destined to receive a great surprise. According to her memory, and it was one to be relied on, even though many years had passed since she had last been here, the road she was following would lead to other clearings where maize was grown, and where, if undisturbed by the rightful owners, they might eat their fill. It was therefore a shock when the road led to a large clear space in which were many strange-looking square objects with bright yellow eyes staring across the smooth moonlit ground. The unwelcome scent of white man mixed with that of native pervaded the cool air in a most disconcerting way. Also there was the smell of smoke, though no fires could be seen. Evidently this was no place for elephant to stay, and the sooner she got away the better. Having come to this wise decision, hastened by the sound of the barking of many dogs, she turned off the road, and in

silence made her way into the limitless forest, followed, of course, by the rest of the herd. Through the deep gloom of the giant trees they moved like gigantic, sombre ghosts, whose polished tusks caught now and then the silver glint of the moon that was directly overhead, and whose rays occasionally found a passage through the dense masses of foliage that showed black against the star-sprinkled sky.

Tembo was unhappy; his dream of unlimited sweet maize was shattered, and, even worse than that, the scent of the white man troubled him. Everything that had been unhappy and unfortunate throughout his life was intimately and painfully associated with that detestable smell. Trusting, however, to the guidance of the wise old cow, he hoped that the trail through the forest would take them away from where men lived. A few hours of steady going through the mountain forest brought the herd to a more or less open glade which was surrounded by great trees, whose densely foliated tops seemed to reach almost to the sky. Through the glade a small stream rippled over moss-covered rocks and distorted roots that had been washed down from the higher land.

Tembo drank deeply of the water, which he found cool and sweet and as clear as crystal. Having satisfied his thirst, he gave himself a shower-bath and then, thoroughly refreshed, he joined the herd in their

midnight meal and continued eating until the sky, brightened by the approaching sunrise, showed with ever-increasing brilliancy beyond the dark tree-tops. The air was cold, colder than he had ever known it, but it was invigorating and sweet and free from any taint of man. With the coming of day, the forest echoed with the songs of myriads of birds singing their morning hymns. Unmusical parrots chattered noisily and made ready to fly down to the lower slopes of the mountain, where they would spend the day. Black and white colobus monkeys darted about among the branches, more like birds than animals, calling to one another in strange tones. A pair of forest hogs passed close to Tembo and made their way towards the brook. These were new to him, and he watched their un-beautiful faces with mild interest until they passed out of his sight. Tiny dik-dik, miniature antelopes, scarcely more than a foot in height, scampered about among the underbrush, full of the joy of living, yet always alert for fear that a leopard might be hiding and watching for them. Tembo saw and heard all that went on in this new home, yet it was of less interest to him than the thought of the abundance of good food and delicious water. True, there was no maize, which was sad, but who could tell whether an expedition would not be undertaken before long back to the country of his dreams? Even the thought

of the all-pervading scent of man where the maize grew would not prevent his enjoying a feast of that wonderful food, if the opportunity offered.

For many days life went on without anything in the way of excitement to break the monotony. Then one fine evening, to Tembo's great joy, the herd, tempted by the thought of good feeding, decided on an excursion into the land of cultivation. Shortly before sunset they set off, and for some time followed an old elephant trail. With the coming of darkness they found that the trail crossed a broad man-made road which evidently led directly towards the maize crops. This road afforded easy walking, even though by following it there was always a chance that they might encounter men; but that did not really matter as they could slip silently into the forest and easily escape observation, for the night was very dark, as the moon did not rise for several hours. Tembo, according to his usual custom, kept well in the front of the line, close to the leading cow. His mind was full of pleasant thoughts about the feast of maize and other possible delicacies that lay ahead, and he hoped that they would not be troubled by men. Suddenly his thoughts were interrupted by a strangely loud noise directly ahead; he had never before heard anything like it, and he and the rest of the herd wondered what new animal had come to the forest. Tembo had sad

visions of something that would devour all the maize before he could get even a small share. The leading cow stopped to listen, and a moment later the stillness of the forest was broken again by another screech even louder than the first, and almost immediately, like an echo, a somewhat similar screech sounded behind the herd. The wise old cow was mystified and frightened; presumably these terrifying sounds spelt danger of a new kind, and she did not know what to do. Before she could decide on a course of action, two dazzlingly bright eyes appeared in the road little more than a hundred yards in front of the bewildered animals, and these eyes threw their light forward so that the trees were lighted as though by sunshine. Almost at the same moment, with a piercing scream and a rumbling sound, two other brilliant eyes, rushing forward, lighted up the road and forest behind the herd, which was now completely bewildered. The wretched beasts looked first one way and then another, but the blinding light filled their eyes and they could see nothing. Suddenly the four dazzling eyes stopped when scarcely fifty yards behind and in front of the elephant, and their large bodies caught the pale glare, so that they looked like gigantic ghosts with burnished tusks. The sensible thing would have been for the elephants to turn off the road, when they would have disappeared immediately into the inky darkness of the forest, but

this did not occur to them in their frenzy of fright. They simply stood their ground, spread their great ears, raised their trunks and screamed with terror. Then a shot rang out, loud, sharp and piercing, and the old cow felt the stinging of a bullet in a fleshy part of her body. Without a moment's hesitation she rushed forward, followed by the rest of the herd closely massed together. In their blind fury they made for the pair of gleaming eyes. There was a mighty crash as they struck the motor, the eyes ceased to shine, and the demolished car was literally crushed into a heap of twisted metal by the impact of the great bodies. The elephants, having vented their dislike for the strange, bright-eyed, screeching monster, thought only of flight, and continued with all possible speed along the road and were soon lost in the gloom of the forest.

It might be well to state that the men had escaped from their car before the crash and had with commendable agility and extraordinary speed climbed the nearest available tree. Later they were picked up by the other car, very thoroughly frightened, but none the worse for the strange adventure, beyond the loss of their motor. Even a Ford could not be expected to withstand the determined charge of a herd of panic-stricken elephant.

Tembo was disgusted and greatly disappointed at

the interruption of plans, but under the circumstances it would be foolish, he knew, to proceed in the direction of the maize-fields near which lived so many white men; therefore with as good a grace as possible he followed the old cow when she finally turned off from the road, and, making a large detour, they all returned to the glade which had become their home.

During the days that followed, the old cow was so irritable that none dared go near her, but gradually the wound healed and she became herself again. At last she passed word round in her own way that they would make another attempt to raid the maize-fields; but this time she led the way through the forest at a safe distance from the road, which apparently belonged to the strange creatures that had such terrible bright eyes, and made such unheard-of noises, and even fired shots just as white men did. So far as could be judged, these monsters must keep to their own trails, for they had never been seen in the tangle of the forest. The night was well advanced when the herd came to the edge of the large trees and found themselves in a large field of the much-desired maize. But before beginning to eat they circled round the clearing, taking the precaution to keep close to the trees, in order to make sure that all was safe. There was the unpleasant scent of human beings, but the scent was not fresh enough to cause alarm, and anyhow it was only that

of natives, so there was little to fear. Tembo was impatient to begin the meal to which he had looked forward with so much pleasure, and as soon as the field had been examined he lost no time in getting to work. Nearly a month had passed since his last feast of maize, and he was somewhat disappointed to find that the grain was no longer creamy and soft; however, the hard maize was very nearly as good as when it was only partly ripe, and he tore up the dried stems with remarkable energy, and with a crackling sound that could be heard for a long distance. With the coming of dawn the herd retired to the shelter of the forest and spent the day in the cool shade in complete peace. Then towards evening, after visiting a near-by stream for a drink, they went in search of another field of maize, carefully avoiding the one they had raided during the previous night. The old cow knew that the rightful owners would most likely be on the look-out for them, for she had had much experience in stealing crops from natives, and on more than one occasion had narrowly escaped serious trouble. In single file, following the leader, they made their way as silently as possible through the dense forest. Frequently they stopped to listen and test the air for any taint of man-scent in the immediate vicinity. Progress was slow, but at last a clearing was reached where there was maize in fair quantity. Besides this,

there was unfortunately the strong taint of man, which was decidedly disturbing. Leaving the rest of the herd in the forest, not far from the clearing, the leader went off by herself to find out whether or not it would be safe to start feeding. She skirted the edge of the trees, moving very slowly and cautiously. Not a sound did she make save for the uncontrollable rumblings of her digestive organs. Now it happened that the natives in the neighbourhood had become alarmed by the recent destruction of the maize. For a long time the place had been free of elephant, as the last herd had been frightened away by the persistent efforts of the white men, who had shot several; but now it was painfully evident that a daring herd had come, and unless vigorous and prompt steps were taken their crops would be lost. From the natives' point of view it was unfortunate that the thieves had not delayed their visit for a couple of weeks, for then the grain would have been ready to gather. Mealies, as the corn is called, were their principal food, and if they failed, the people would be reduced to serious straits; so they had gone to the white men who ruled the district and begged for help. There were several men recently come from England who were only too anxious to have a chance of shooting elephant, and they were glad enough to take advantage of such an opportunity; so they arranged to go with the

natives, one with each of the several parties, and spend the night watching the crops in the hope of getting a shot. Shooting elephant at night is both difficult and unsatisfactory, as the vital spots are small, and even in daylight none too easy to hit except at close quarters. However, with the characteristic enthusiasm of youth and inexperience, they went forth full of hope. The moon was nearly full, so that from a high position any animal coming into a clearing would be seen with reasonable clearness. One of the officials with his gun-bearer and several natives who owned the crop had taken up their positions on the branches of a dead tree in the middle of the maize-field which the elephant were planning to raid.

In the wonderful stillness of the night the sharp ears of the natives caught the sound of the stomach rumblings, and one of them whispered to the white man a word of warning. In the meantime the old cow, full of suspicion, remained absolutely still while debating as to whether or not it was safe for the herd to commence feeding. But the rest of the animals became impatient, and one by one they left the safety of the darkened forest and, entering the field of maize, began to eat. The old cow, hearing the sound of their noisy feeding and noting that they were not molested, came out to join them. Unfortunately for the herd, they fed directly towards the tree in which

the men were stationed. Closer and closer they came, until they were within less than forty yards of it. Then suddenly two shots in quick succession rang out with a deafening sound, and one of the larger bulls fell dead and the old cow received a stunning blow in the head. Panic-stricken, the rest of the elephant, not knowing which way to retreat, rushed about screaming with terror. Another shot rang out, and again another, and two more of the frightened beasts were hit. With a mighty rush, followed by many more shots, they all tore their way through the dry maize and into the friendly shelter of the forest. For over an hour they crashed their way through the dense undergrowth, and then, finding that they were not pursued, they slowed down and finally stopped. The old cow with the malformed tusk and one of the larger bulls were missing, and another bull, suffering from a severe wound, was in a pitiful condition, and several others were more or less seriously injured.

Among the injured was Tembo, who had received a bullet in his massive body and was in great pain. When the rest of the herd moved off once more, he remained behind, a wiser and very much sadder animal. Maize, he concluded, was dangerous food, which for the future he would leave alone. He scarcely noticed the departure of the herd until long after they had disappeared, and even then he thought

little about it. Utterly miserable and dejected, he stood close to a large wild-fig tree and wondered whether he would see the light of another day. A fire seemed to be burning his vitals as though his enemy, man, had shot a red-hot coal into him. Morning found him still standing in the same place, with head down and trunk resting wearily on the leaf-strewn ground. He longed for a drink of cool water, yet dared not move for fear of increasing the pain that was sapping his vitality.

The crackling of a twig made him awake to the fact that perhaps his enemy was following the tracks made by himself and the rest of the herd. He raised his head, spread his great ears and listened attentively. Without doubt something was approaching from the direction of the scene of last night's calamity. Move he must, and quickly too, regardless of the pain that each step caused, or he would be seen by those who were following the trail! Having learned much during the past years he knew that to go straight ahead would mean that his enemies would follow on and on and give him no rest, so he turned off from the tracks made by the herd and made his way, in a large curve, back to one side of where he had heard the disturbing sounds. He walked slowly, lamely, and with great effort, yet without sound. His very life depended on his caution. A broken twig, a branch shaken, and his

presence would be revealed. To ensure his safety, he must see his enemies and yet remain unseen, and so it was that he made his way among the great trees, through dark-leaved bushes, over fallen moss-covered branches and dead trunks, until at last he got wind of those who would kill him as they had killed his friend the wise old cow. The scent having come to him on the gentle breeze that scarcely stirred the leaves, he stopped, still as the trunks of the trees about him, his large dark-grey body mingling in tone with the foliage, his thick legs like the very trunks of the trees that shaded him. Thus he remained until a line of men, both white and native, passed along on the tracks of the herd that had vanished. They had easy work following the trail, for the herd had moved rapidly; bushes and small trees were torn and trampled on, and here and there the leaves and ground were flecked with drops of blood still wet and glistening. The trail being so easy, the men did not notice where Tembo had turned to one side. They went on and on until they were lost to view, and then only did Tembo feel that he was safe, at least for the present. Safe but miserable, and so very thirsty. Yet how could he walk to the nearest stream, which was several miles away? For some hours he considered the question, and at last, shortly after noon, he summoned up courage for the attempt; and it was nearly sunset

before he managed to drag his pain-racked body to the cold mountain stream. He drank long and gratefully, and then took himself to a clump of thick bushes, where he stood and slept, utterly tired and sick in mind and body. Even the far-distant sounds of rifle-shots failed to interest him. If enemies came, he decided that he would not move; to die would be easier.

For a week or more life was altogether miserable. He drank frequently of the ice-cold water, but he had little desire to eat. Then the pain lessened, and day by day he improved in health, and with the change came an ever-increasing appetite, so that his body, which had become so thin that the rough creased skin hung in loose folds, began to fill out; and by the end of a month he was once more in his normal condition, except that he was lame, and walking was somewhat difficult. He was forced to travel slowly and could not go far. In his short wanderings about the forest he never came across any of his own kind, so he concluded that the herd, which he had known all his life, had left the mountain forest for good.

One day, many months later, when he was feeding near a road he heard men and smelt the fearful scent, so he determined to make his way up the mountain slopes and get as far away as possible from his enemies. Months passed, years passed, and still he kept to the

mountain forest. Sometimes he would live not far from where the ground was covered occasionally with snow, and the nights were bitterly cold. But cold was better than men, and he lived his life of solitude, happy and contented notwithstanding the chronic lameness which had resulted from the wound. He grew larger and larger with the passing of the years, and his tusks became thick and heavy. Twenty years or more went by before he again encountered his human enemies. Then one day, while walking slowly along an old trail, he suddenly met several white men accompanied by their native porters. They had come round a bend in the path and he met them at close quarters. His first idea was to charge and destroy these creatures who had killed his mother and had so nearly ended his own life. But that strange instinct which seems to distinguish danger from safety held him back, and he stood still and watched the puny figures who, though so small, were capable of inflicting death without any visible effort. Would they, or would they not, make a blood-curdling shriek and send a death-dealing bullet? He was so big that perhaps they would be powerless to hurt him, but if they did fire, he was determined that the only thing to do would be to trample them to death. But no shot came. The men simply stood still and watched him. This was more than Tembo could endure, and

he turned from the path and crashed noisily through the forest.

During the days that passed he met several rhinos and other animals, including two lions; also he came frequently on the scent of man, and even saw them occasionally. Yet they never molested him in any way, nor did he hear sounds of rifles. This gave him a feeling of security, and he roamed about with less and less caution. In one of these wanderings he crossed a river which ran from the snow-clad mountain down to the vast sun-scorched plains ever so far away. Scarcely had he waded through the ice-cold water and landed on the bank than the breeze carried to him the human scent. Formerly this would have alarmed him to such an extent that his one thought would have been retreat, but his recent experiences had made him wonder whether after all man was to be feared; so instead of making off he proceeded to pull down the branches of rich succulent leaves and begin eating. At this very moment he saw something moving in the bushes on the farther side of a small grassy opening. As luck would have it he moved quickly to one side at this instant, just in time to avoid a bullet which came screeching past his head. With his mouth still full of leaves, he turned and made off as fast as he could, crossing the narrow river with a mighty splashing of water, then up the low bank, and

a moment later he was in the protecting shelter of the forest. He was puzzled greatly by what had happened, and felt that it would be necessary again to readjust his opinion of man, notwithstanding his recent experiences; but then again came the question, why had the man not followed him after firing? Other men had always been more persistent, and once they had caught sight of elephant they had always pursued in a way that had been most disturbing. It occurred to him vaguely that perhaps the river was a barrier, and as months went by he became more and more convinced that he had been right, because on several occasions men were encountered in the country on the western side of the river and never once did they make any attempt to shoot, while on the eastern side he found that he was stalked more than once, and several times he heard the dreaded rifle-shots. By a simple and logical process of reasoning he came to the conclusion that the region on one side of the river was safe, and that the other was dangerous; consequently he decided that for the future it would be advisable to keep to the safe side.

Tembo did not know, of course, that he was on a large tract of country which was a game reserve where no shooting was allowed, but, like all animals, he soon learned the boundary of the sanctuary. It was fortunate for him that he had taken the lesson to heart,

because throughout the country his reputation had spread and men were anxious to secure the massive tusks which he carried. These represented money and man's cupidity was aroused. Many a hunter spent long weary hours watching for the "lame tusker", as he was called, to come outside the limits of the reserve. One we know had made a bad attempt to shoot him when he crossed the river, and a few others had seen the much-sought animal but had not succeeded in stalking him, in spite of their painstaking efforts. This, of course, invested Tembo with a certain glamour, which increased as the years rolled by and large tuskers became more and more rare. He became known far and near not only for the size of his great yellowing tusks, but for his extraordinary sagacity. All sorts of schemes were devised to tempt him out of the protected area, but always with conspicuous failure; and yet it was a common thing to see the great solitary beast in his favourite forest where he could be approached without difficulty to within forty or fifty yards. He would look at the intruder with mild curiosity, and then slowly and deliberately turn away and disappear among the forest shadows.

Other elephants discovered the secret of the reserve and made it their home, but Tembo did not mix with them. His life had become a life of solitude and he was quite content, wishing only to be left alone to

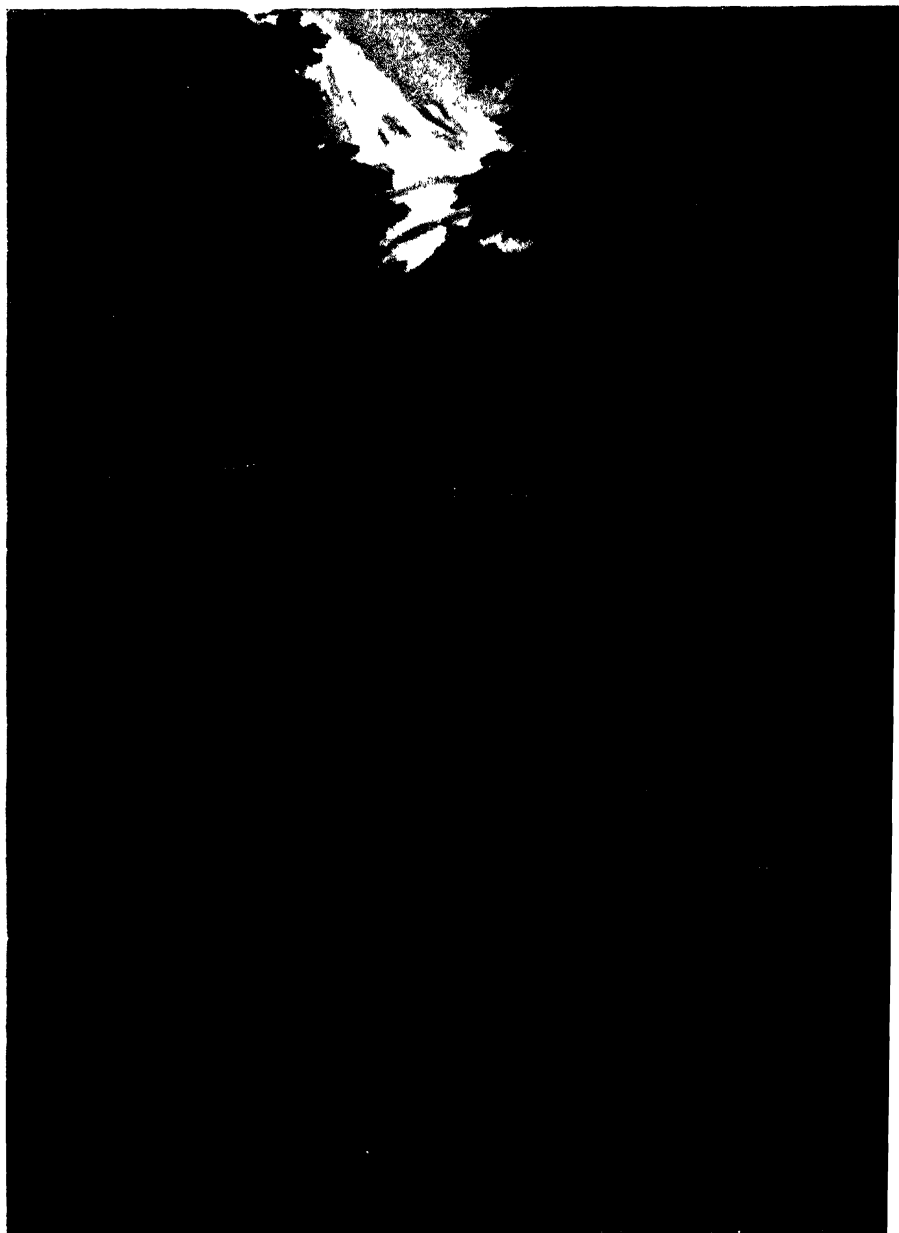
grow old in a land where, free from enemies, he could always find abundance of good food and drinking water; then, too, there were certain pools in which he could enjoy an occasional mud-bath and some of the larger trees growing near these wallows were plastered with mud to a great height where he rubbed himself.

Visitors to the reserve were taken to these places and would gaze in awe at the height of the smooth coats of mud on the various trees. They wondered at the size of the monster who left this clear record of his height. They even wished to see him in his native home, and, wishing, they were filled with the fear of meeting him.

To see elephant in their wild state became increasingly difficult as years went by and the country became more and more settled. Even the game reserves had one by one been given up to agriculture, so that of the few that remained this one where Tembo lived high up on the mountain slopes was almost the last within easy access.

The time came at last when Tembo felt that his days were numbered; he had lived many, many years; nearly a thousand times had the full moon furnished light for his night's foraging; but his eyes had grown dim with age. The lameness which had handicapped him ever since his last memorable feed of maize was





SLOWLY, VERY SLOWLY, HE WALKED THROUGH THE GREAT FOREST  
AND ON AND ON HE WENT AND WHERE HE STOPPED NO MAN KNOWS."

causing increasing trouble and he walked more and more slowly. Food ceased to interest him, and his gigantic body became flat-sided, with loose wrinkled skin hanging from the scantily covered protruding bones. His tusks, the prizes longed for by so many men, had lost their gleaming whiteness and were dull-coloured and disfigured by innumerable cracks, his deeply wrinkled trunk had lost much of its mighty power and its extreme sensitiveness was vanishing. One fine evening, when the sinking sun was casting a glorious glow of deep orange on the snow-covered peaks of the mountain which guarded the forest reserve, Tembo took a farewell drink at his favourite stream and then turned his back on it for ever. Slowly, very slowly, he walked through the great forest which for so long had been his home, passed the muddy pools where he had enjoyed his frequent mud-baths; on and on he went, and where he stopped no man knows, but the reserve will see him no more. The mud-rubbed trees will be washed clean by tropical rains, and the scarred trunks will tell those who come to the land from which elephant have vanished the story of the size of the mighty Tembo.



# **SIMBA, THE BLACK-MANED LION**



## SIMBA, THE BLACK-MANED LION

IN the east, like a great ball of fire, the sun appeared above the horizon beyond the mist-covered plains and rapidly changed the soft purple of dawn to the hot yellow of the African day. Dotted about among the long dry grass, herds of antelope of many kinds were feeding and moving slowly in the direction of a muddy waterhole in the otherwise dry river-bed that wound its way across the sun-baked plains. In a small grove of flat-topped thorn trees a number of tall giraffe were making their breakfast of leaves from the topmost branches, and near them a group of zebra, in single file, were walking slowly to join the other animals at the waterhole.

A solitary hyena shuffled along in the awkward fashion of his kind as though ashamed of being seen by the light of day. He had foraged all night, a scavenger of the plains, and now he was heading towards his den in a rocky hill-side where he could spend his day in sleep.

Near the top of a boulder-strewn hill was a large black-maned lion. He was a magnificent beast in the

prime of life, soft tawny yellow in colour with the indistinct "puppy" spots faintly visible on his sides. His head and neck were well covered with a heavy mane, the upper part of which was almost black. His height at the shoulder was about forty-four inches and his length fully nine feet five inches, and he weighed at least five hundred pounds. He lay on a flat rock watching the plains below with the satisfied air of one who had dined well during the night, and before dawn had drunk his fill at a small pool several miles away and not far from a Kikuyu village. That he had killed a fine calf belonging to one of the villagers mattered not at all to him. They who owned cattle should build a higher stockade or *boma*; if they were too lazy to do so, the price must be paid, and the lion wondered whether he could with safety pay another visit to this same cattle kraal. It was risky of course, for the Kikuyu have long sharp spears, but the meat was good and cattle more easy to catch than the alert antelope or zebra. The calf had been quickly and silently killed and carried over the low thorn hedge to a suitable place near the pool of water about half a mile from the village. There the lion had eaten abundantly, choosing only the select portions of the hind leg and back. Scarcely had he begun the meal when a prowling hungry jackal, scenting the kill, came near and watched the lion with envious eyes.

Gradually the smell of the meat became too much for the little scavenger and she made a dart forward, but stopped nervously as the lion gave a low growl of warning. It was difficult to know what to do; she had a family of hungry cubs eagerly awaiting her return, for they had fared badly the previous night, when one small coney had been divided among the four, and well she knew that the scent of the calf would soon attract many other jackals and hyenas. News of a kill travels with lightning speed in the wilds, and it would be but a short time before the other parasites would arrive, and whatever the lion left would be fought over by the ravenous creatures, so that the little mother-jackal would find it no easy task to secure sufficient meat for herself and her young; therefore time was important; but one animal has a difficult task stealing meat from a lion; two or more have a better chance, as one can attract the killer's attention while the others dart in and snatch a morsel whenever an opportunity offers.

Before long a second silent-footed figure approached, ghost-like in the soft star-light, and again another appeared as though by magic. If the lion saw these little silvery-grey scavengers it was not apparent, for he paid not the slightest attention, but continued his meal, tearing at the still warm meat and gulping it down in a noisy manner. The three jackals

decided to lose no more time, and as though by pre-arranged signal they advanced each from a different direction until they were within a yard or so of the kill. There they hesitated, as the lion had stopped eating and was watching and uttering a very low growl of warning. For several minutes no move was made. Then the arrival of a prowling hyena caused the lion to turn his head that he might see who the new intruder was. Two of the jackals took this opportunity to make a quick dash forward and grab each a scrap of meat and dart away to enjoy the stolen morsels; but the mother-jackal had not been quick enough, and she backed away a few feet in case the lion should resent the liberty that had been taken and punish her for what had happened. However, he showed no intention of troubling her, but continued his meal, whilst his audience looked on with envious eyes.

More ghost-like figures began to arrive until a dozen or more hyenas and jackals had formed themselves in a rude circle around the king of beasts. Occasionally one, more daring than the others, would dash in and seize a scrap of meat or piece of offal, whereupon the others would squabble with him for possession of the stolen morsel. The hideous snarls and growls of these ghouls disturbed the stillness of the night and attracted still more of the scavengers,

and by the time the lion had gorged himself the place was alive with the hungry crew.

Having finished the meal, Simba seemed loath to leave what remained, and for a long time he lay there, a true dog in the manger; but at last the light on the horizon warned him of the approaching dawn: that, and the desire for a drink, made him move away towards the small waterhole, where he quenched his thirst. Scarcely had he left the remains of the calf than the scavengers rushed and in a mad fight demolished the last remnants of flesh and skin. Even the bones had been carried off by the time dawn brought a number of vultures to the scene.

And now in the peace of early morning the black-maned lion lay contentedly and watched the plains and mountains come into view. Slowly he made his toilet, licking the last stain of blood from his great soft paws, and then, after satisfying himself that no enemy was following his tracks to demand punishment for the crime he had committed, he stood up, gave a mighty yawn, and, turning his back to the rising sun, made his way among the boulders towards his well-hidden den. There in the dark cave-like tunnel beneath the mass of grey rocks, safe from disturbing flies or avenging natives, he would sleep in perfect peace until the sun had completed its course from east to west. Other creatures must worry continually;

not so the lion, for he seldom moved about during daylight and at night there was not much to fear. His only serious enemy was man, and after all he was dull-witted and easily avoided as a rule, notwithstanding his spears, rifles and poisonous arrows. While other animals stayed in the open and could be seen so easily, he had sense enough to retire to the safety of his den, where there was but little chance of being disturbed.

It is true that at times the feeling of self-satisfied security due to strength and the habits of his kind received a shock, for had he not lost his mate only a few moons past, and with her death the four baby cubs had starved. But then that had happened through a combination of unfortunate conditions. Food had been scarce, as most of the animals had moved away from the district in search of better pasture; then, too, a roving pack of thirty-five lions had been killing so frequently that the few remaining antelope and zebra were more than usually alert and difficult to approach.

For two nights after the cubs had been born the hungry pair had hunted in vain; even wart-hogs, which they would look upon with disdain under ordinary conditions, were hunted eagerly but without success. On the third evening they had left the den when the sun was still high, and while making their

way across a tree-dotted valley they had come upon the scent of human beings. As a rule they made a point of avoiding these curious creatures, for their strange ways of protecting themselves were difficult to understand; they killed silently or with a short, sharp noise even when a long way off, so that the hunter had no chance to defend himself. No wonder, then, that they were seldom interfered with, especially when the country contained so many defenceless animals which, though alert, were practically harmless. But here was an occasion which demanded taking what would otherwise be an unnecessary risk. The mother-lion must have food or her new-born family would suffer. The tracks through the yellow grass were numerous and the scent quite fresh, so the lions followed the visible and invisible trails with the utmost caution.

It was not long before the stragglers of a *safari* party were seen, and beyond them, on the edge of a small waterhole, was the usual scene of activity connected with the making of a camp. With so many men moving about, the lions dared not move farther forward, and they crouched in the grass and watched patiently for some opportunity to offer itself. The lioness, almost beside herself with hunger and the thought of her cubs, eventually moved forward towards a group of men who were gathering firewood; closer

and closer she crawled, her whole attention riveted on the unsuspecting negroes. The lion, keenly interested but less courageous, watched, when suddenly two white men with a gun-bearer approached from behind, and they were scarcely ten springs away when he heard their voices. Self-preservation being the first law of nature, his one thought was to get away unobserved; under the conditions no warning could be given to his mate without the risk of calling attention to himself; so, crouching low, he made his way in absolute silence through the long yellow grass, and scarcely had he gone any distance when the gun-bearer, seeing the grass move, made out the yellow-grey form and quickly whispered the one word "Simba"<sup>1</sup> to the white men, who rushed forward to a low ant-hill where they could obtain a better view of the surroundings. It was at this moment that the lioness, who had approached to within springing distance of her expected quarry, was poised ready for the fatal rush. The gun-bearer, greatly excited, pointed her out to the sportsmen, and a moment later two shots rang out almost simultaneously. This was how the lion had lost his mate.

The following day the cubs died, and, as though disliking the den which had been his home for over a year, he had moved away from the district and

<sup>1</sup> Lion.

taken up his present quarters in a country of plains and mountains, where game was abundant and native villages were scattered about the lower slopes of the hills. Their cattle formed an added attraction, for they were there for the taking when game proved difficult to catch.

During the time that he had been in the district no regular shooting parties had visited it, and consequently life had been free from anxiety; and when he felt the wish to sleep in the swamp among the papyrus or high grass he could do so without much fear of being disturbed.

Altogether life was greatly to his liking; he seldom went hungry and very rarely did the sound of the rifle break the silence of the country.

Once in a while a strange creature came across the plains, to the consternation of the animal world. It was larger than a rhino, it snorted and made strange noises and left behind it a powerfully foul scent as though of some queer substance afire, and yet the trail was never burnt. It moved backwards or forwards, turned with alarming suddenness, travelled at times as fast as the swiftest animal, and, strangest of all, when it stopped it seemed to give birth to men, who would shoot at the fear-stricken animals which had been chased till, through fear and exhaustion, they were compelled to stop and gaze spellbound at the terrible

monster that never got tired. When the wretched animals were shot they disappeared and were apparently eaten by the evil-smelling brute, for no trace of their bodies could be found. The black-maned lion had witnessed all this happen on more than one occasion, and after the snorting horror had galloped away without legs such as all other creatures have, he had once gone to where an eland had been killed. There was little to show what had happened. There was the scent of human beings, but that was almost lost in the foul odour of the strange monster that behaved so curiously. For several miles the lion followed the evil scent from a sense of curiosity, but it seemed to go on for ever. That same night it appeared again, roaring across the plains, over which it sent a dazzling light that was blinding to those that came within its reach. The two great eyes were like the sunlight in their brilliance; and then when the thing had passed another blood-coloured eye could be seen at the back. It was altogether a fear-inspiring giant which no animal would dare to investigate too closely, and the lion wondered whether it would not be best to leave a country where such creatures roamed about and followed no law known to the wild beasts.

In the dark den Simba slept peacefully throughout the day; no visitor troubled him, for the scent warned all prowlers that the den was occupied. Outside on

the grey rocks lizards in gorgeous colours basked in the sunshine or moved about silently in search of food. A few hyrax (coney or rock rabbits) played among the burnt vegetation, keeping a sharp look-out for hawks and other enemies, but beyond these there was little sign of life on the rocky hill-side. As the sun sank slowly in the west the entrance of the den was in deep shadow, and the lion, after lazily stretching himself, came out to look about and decide on the night's hunting. He was not troubled by hunger, but then it is well to eat with regularity whenever it is possible; and the memory of the fat calf eaten that morning was pleasant, and there seemed no real reason why he should not enjoy a similar repast during the coming night. It is well worth the risk. At least he thought so as he sat on the stony ground not far from the den. As the sun vanished behind the distant purple hills he stood up; he was bored and lonely and gave vent to his feelings by a series of blood-curdling roars which commenced with great volume and gradually died down till they were mere murmurs. Perhaps some other lion equally lonely would answer the call, and he stood still for a long time as though expecting the reply that did not come. Other animals heard the far-reaching sound; some long-faced hartebeest that were feeding not far away on the plains with a few Grant's and Thompson's gazelles and

zebra heard their enemy's call, but they paid not the slightest attention to it except that one or two looked up towards the rocky hill-side and then, after a moment's pause, resumed the more important task of feeding. At no time did they abandon the rule for caution which is the safeguard of those whose enemies are many and clever, and after every few mouthfuls of coarse dry grass each one would lift his head and look about, chiefly down-wind, for their sharp noses could detect the scent of anything approaching from the other direction; but with heads down an enemy might easily approach unseen if he came against the wind. The younger members of the herd were as much interested in play as in food and romped about just as children might do, indulging in simple games of hide-and-seek, catch-as-catch-can, varied by occasional good-natured fights. In all their play the antelope were practically silent, but now and then the zebra made the curious sound as though of a dog barking, and their play was not of the happy sort displayed by the antelope; far from it, for they kicked and bit each other with savage ill-temper. The lion watched so long as daylight lasted, and that was but a short time after the sun had disappeared. Then once more he gave forth his mighty roar which echoed among the rocky hills and disturbed the quietness of the African evening. But still no reply came, and he

left his look-out position and made his way slowly down the hill with no settled idea of where he would go or what he would do. The thought of another calf continued to occupy his mind, yet it was not easy to decide whether or not to risk another visit to the scene of last night's killing. However, there were other villages within easy distance which might prove safer, and perhaps it might be well to investigate their cattle *bomas* and see if any were low enough to be entered. Of course there would be no chance of finding stray cattle in the open, as they are always driven into the enclosures before dark.

The handsome beast walked silently along a native footpath, his massive form but a grey intangible mass which seemed to blend in with the colour of the grass and thorn bush. Now and then he made a low murmuring sound as though humming a tune to himself. It was just a whisper that seemed absurdly small when coming from so powerful an animal. Sometimes he would stop and look about him and sniff the air when there was the sound of an animal scuttling away in fear at knowing from the scent that an enemy was near. Once he saw a flaming torch coming directly towards him. This meant natives, and they would be armed with long sharp spears, and they might be carrying shields, so that to attack them would be foolish. Even should he succeed in doing so it would only mean that

for days his life would be in constant peril as the villagers would gather together and try to hunt him down. So this was a risk that was certainly not worth taking, and having come to this wise conclusion he quietly left the path and crouched in the dry grass not many paces away. The almost naked men—there were three of them—in ignorance of the lion's presence, were laughing and talking as they came along with long, quick strides, waving the lighted torch to frighten away any beasts that might be dangerous; they made a strange picture with the orange light reflecting on their well-oiled naked bodies. Had they looked carefully to their right they would have seen two eyes blazing like jewels reflecting the light of the torch, but they passed along in happy ignorance, and then the lion followed them for some distance, impelled by the same curiosity that makes us tempt fate by approaching danger when reason demands that we keep away. For some distance the strange procession continued, and then the lion, having satisfied his curiosity, stopped and a few minutes later turned and resumed his way along the path towards the village.

As he drew near to the small collection of grass-covered huts he proceeded more cautiously until he was within sight of the cattle *boma*. Then the sudden barking of some dogs and the bellowing of the penned-up animals showed that his presence was discovered,

so he quietly withdrew to the protection of some low thorn bushes and waited till the alarm subsided; but it was some time before the usual hush of night rested once more on the little village. Then when there was no sound save the occasional muffled talking and laughter in the huts among the banana trees he moved forward again to investigate the height of the thorn fence surrounding the cattle. The night breeze had sprung up and it carried the scent of the prowler towards the village, and once more the keen-nosed dogs barked out their cry of warning, and once more the lion retreated; but this time he went back a long way and then circled round so that he might approach up-wind.

In the pale light of the moon the little village of grass-thatched huts seemed very peaceful. The warning barking of the dogs had scarcely disturbed the inmates of the huts, for they were too much accustomed to prowlers coming about and causing the dogs at least a temporary uneasiness. Simba, being in no particular hurry, for the night was yet young, came to within sight of the cattle enclosure and then sat down to await the silence that would come when the people had gone to sleep. It would be safer then. As he crouched beneath a leafless thorn bush, a dog came along from a visit to a friend on the other side of the village. The dog suddenly scented the lion and

*stopped, sniffing the air to ascertain in which direction the danger lay. It was a miserable-looking little yellow native dog, one of the many that got a precarious living in the village. No one cared much whether it lived or died, for dogs were common and of no special value. The lion watched the yellow dog, which was looking up in an anxious way, when there was quick motion in the direction of some bushes near by and a leopard sprang out of its hiding-place, seized the wretched animal, and was away immediately, leaving nothing to show that the tragedy had been enacted.*

It is curious that leopards should apparently prefer dogs to any form of food, except perhaps monkeys; but monkeys are alert little people and therefore difficult to catch, while dogs fall an easy prey to the soft-footed, quick-moving leopard, whose daring is almost limitless. Not even a fire will be a safeguard against their attacks, and in some cases dogs have been taken from beneath their masters' chairs.

The lion noted the disappearance of the dog without any evidence of excitement; if he was interested it was only to the extent of feeling that there was one less dog to give warning of his coming, and that was something for which to be thankful. By the time the moon had risen directly overhead, so that the shadows were scarcely noticeable in the soft blue light, the village had become quiet, save for the

occasional uneasy calls of the cattle, who seemed to suspect the presence of danger.

The lion at last thought that the time had come when he could enter with safety the thorn *boma*, but first he examined it carefully to see where was the lowest part over which he would be able to carry his intended victim; but the stockade had been well built, and everywhere the thorny fence was higher than he liked. Of course he could enter wherever he wished, but to carry out even a calf would prove a somewhat difficult task. Foolishly he walked around the boma and so made his presence known to the cattle, and their panic-stricken cries soon aroused the natives, who came out brandishing burning sticks and carrying their deadly spears. Discretion, said to be the better part of valour, decided the lion to lose no time in retiring to the neighbouring scrub, where he determined to wait until the excitement had quieted down. Unfortunately for him his tracks had been discovered, and before long he realised that he was being followed to his hiding-place. He might, of course, stand his ground, or even attack the men, but, being a cautious creature, it seemed wiser to move away from the immediate vicinity of the village, as he knew well enough that the people would not care to follow far by the dim light of the moon and the flickering yellow light of the burning torches. The villagers, after

making as much noise as they could by shouting and knocking their hard buffalo-hide shields, believed that their enemy had been driven away for good; they then went back to their huts and their interrupted sleep.

Once again Simba, attracted irresistibly by the thought of a meal, came silently back to the *bōma*. So silently did he move that even the cattle were not aware of his coming, until, with a powerful bound, he landed in their midst, and before they had time to realise what had happened, the great beast had killed a well-grown calf. The deafening bellowing of the frightened cattle aroused all the dogs in the village, also the men, who rushed out of their huts, grabbing their spears as they went. All would have gone well with the lion had the thorn-tree stockade not been so high. He would then have leapt clear, carrying the calf with him, but in his first effort to jump he failed to clear the fence, and before he had time for another attempt, the shouting natives had arrived. Abandoning the calf, the lion sprang over the barrier, but ill-luck was with him, for it happened that one of the men, who was only a few yards away, caught sight of him and hurled his spear with such well-directed aim that it struck the animal in the flank. As luck would have it, the long steel shaft did not go in very far and the spear dropped out as the lion touched the ground. The stinging pain of the wound made the

animal so frightened that all thought of fight was knocked out of him. To escape was his one idea, and he rushed past his assailant and quickly disappeared from view.

He had made a sad mess of his hunting, and it was a sorry lion that made his painful way through the thorn-bush scrub. Nor did he stop until all sound of the village had died away in the distance. Then only did he lie down and lick the bleeding wound in his thigh. Not until the blood had ceased to flow did he resume his way, and he limped badly as he walked. There would be no more hunting for him that night. All he wanted was water to quench his feverish thirst, and he visited a small pool in the papyrus swamp, and from there walked slowly back to his den in the rocky hill-side. It was nearly morning when he arrived, and as he crept into the inky dark hole he felt that stealing cattle was, after all, a foolish game and not worth the risk. He had been deluded by the ease with which he had succeeded the previous night, but for the future he would be content with hunting animals well away from the vicinity of men and spears. This at least was his resolve as he lay down on the cool earth, and after licking his wound once more he fell asleep, a troubled sleep with dreams of countless men and spears and bellowing cattle.

The sun had risen and set before the injured lion awoke. He tried to rise, but the leg had stiffened, and any attempt to move it was dreadfully painful; and yet move he must if he would relieve the terrible thirst with which he was tormented. But the nearest water was a long way off, at least a long way for a wounded animal to go, though under normal conditions he would have thought nothing of it. Slowly and so very painfully he got up and, limping out into the cool evening air, went towards the nearest water-hole. It was one which he usually avoided, for the water was muddy and fouled by the visits of many thirsty animals; but he was in no condition to be over-particular. Water of any sort he must have and as soon as possible, and so it was he continued across the grass-covered plain, passing herds of antelope and zebra that seemed to realise that they had no reason to fear this limping creature who paid no attention at all to them as he made his way in such distress towards the dirty pool that meant so much to him to-night. It seemed as though it were so much farther away than usual, but at last he reached it and lay there in the slimy, hoof-pitted mud and lapped up the evil-smelling fluid with more satisfaction than he had ever known from even the finest of clean rain-water. He drank long and deep, for his thirst was insatiable, and having drunk he moved back only a few feet to cleaner

ground and lay there, too weary to go farther, too weary even to notice the herd of zebra that came towards the waterhole with such caution. In the clear moonlight they were very beautiful, their stripes showing now with startling clearness, now melting into the background, so that only their black muzzles were distinguishable. They seemed to know that all was not right, and first one would come forward as though to investigate, then, filled with some instinctive fear, he would retreat; then another would try it. But the scent of the lion was very distinct; the question was whether or not the animal himself was there, and that was difficult to decide without taking the risk of a closer examination, and none dared take this risk. In the end they moved off to another waterhole some distance away.

Throughout the long night the maimed lion stayed near the muddy pool, going down at intervals to quench the feverish thirst with which he was consumed. Many visitors came, but all turned back at the scent of their common enemy. Some of the antelope came several times and seemed surprised that the lion should still be there, for as a rule they drink and leave without wasting much time.

There seems to be some understanding among the creatures of the wilds that killing at a waterhole must not be done; and though the more defenceless

animals do not actually drink with their enemy and take every precaution to see that the place is clear before coming too close, they are seldom if ever molested while drinking. There may be occasionally a black sheep in the lion fold who disregards this law of the wild, but it is a very rare occurrence, notwithstanding the common belief to the contrary. That there is this law seems almost certain, otherwise the lion and leopard would never trouble to stalk their prey. They would simply hide in the cover which is usually found near water and lie there and await the arrival of the various animals. It would be so easy and so sure. At least, so it must appear to us, but there are so many things which we do not understand that it is rash to assert that this or that *must* be the case, and though we may like to attribute chivalrous reasons to the behaviour of wild creatures, it is quite possible that we are sadly at fault. Perhaps the lion has in the past tried to kill at a waterhole and the animals have learned to be particularly alert and cautious when approaching such a place. Certain it is that only very rarely do any animals, especially those that are defenceless, come *directly* to water. If there are many in the herd, they more often than not send scouts ahead to see that the way is clear; sometimes they circle the drinking-place and so get the wind from every direction, and if there is any taint in

the air they are warned. Even single animals will do this, so that it is quite possible that the lion would not find killing at a waterhole so easy as it would appear to be.

With the coming of morning, when the sky began to show the glow of the sun that would soon appear, the black-maned lion was still by the side of the muddy pool. He was trying to decide what would be best to do. In his present condition he must not risk an encounter with his greatest enemy, man, and yet he would like to stay within reach of water so that he might drink frequently during the day; but then there was but scant cover near by, and no shade, and shade from the heat of the tropical sun was absolutely necessary to him in his present condition; were it not for that he might risk lying in the dry grass and be reasonably safe from observation, as he could easily find a place where the colour of the grass would match his own tawny yellow to perfection. His magnificent black mane might be somewhat conspicuous, it is true, still if he kept his head low it would be fairly safe; but the question of shade finally decided him to seek again the cool, dark den, even though it meant that he must go thirsty all day. He would wait as long as possible before the heat of the day and then take one long drink before leaving; and so he lay there and watched the sun rise. Yesterday he had watched it

contentedly, pleased with life: to-day all looked so very different and life seemed bitter to this injured monarch. He did not see the beauty of that glorious sunrise, did not see the brilliant orange colour reflected on the millions of dewdrops that sparkled on the grass like precious stones. To him the sun was something to dread, something to avoid, for it meant heat and discomfort, and he must retire to the shelter of his lair before the cool of the early morning had given way to the heat of day. He would take one more drink and then go.

Slowly and painfully he raised his great body and stood there, a magnificent picture painted gold by the low sun. As he was about to take a step forward there came to him the sound of many flocks of sand-grouse whistling through the still air. Flock after flock dropped with lightning speed, and the edge of the pool was a mass of the nervously active birds that took but a sip of water and then flew away to their feeding grounds. And then came the sound of something more solid as a large rhino came slowly across the plains. But if the mighty beast saw the lion he paid little attention to him. He was coming for his morning bath, and lions did not interest him. On he came with but one idea in his dull mind—the wallow—and, walking into the pool, he lay down in the muddy water so that his great body was half submerged. It

was refreshing and he decided to stay there for a long time. This, of course, was not at all to the lion's liking. He wanted to drink and get away, but the rhino was stirring up the pool until it was a mass of bubbling mud which would not settle for many hours. To drive the bather away might be possible, but somehow the idea did not appeal to the injured lion, for rhino have long horns which are very sharp and which they know well enough how to use. Any thought of that last drink must be abandoned, and the lion, the very picture of dejection, limped away across the grassy plains towards his home among the rocks.

Once in his den, away from the torment of flies, which, since daylight, had been buzzing round his wound, he settled himself down to sleep a feverish sleep and await the coming of evening, when in the welcome dusk he could once more visit the waterhole. The day passed slowly, and with it the fever abated, and in its place came an overwhelming hunger and thirst; water he would be able to get, but it seemed very doubtful whether the injured leg would allow him to stalk any animal with even a reasonable chance of success. The only hope lay in finding a fawn, or perhaps a zebra colt some distance away from its mother, and this would be difficult, for wild animals watch their young with a solicitude which is seldom relaxed. Walking proved difficult owing to

the extreme stiffness and tenderness of the leg, but still things might have been worse, and he was able to proceed with fair speed. First of all he would visit the waterhole and quench his thirst, and then, well, he would see what developed. One thing was certain, and that was that he would avoid the village, even though there was the possibility of finding a herd of goats or sheep somewhere about being taken back to their shelter for the night, and they would be in charge of small boys who would be armed with diminutive bows and arrows which were scarcely capable of doing any serious injury; but it was rather too late for this hope to be realised, as the people, especially the younger ones, seldom take the risk of being out late with their animals. Even during the bright light of day a sharp look-out has to be kept all the time, so before the sun sets all cattle are, as a rule, placed more or less securely in the thorn-bush enclosures.

Darkness had settled on the land before the hungry lion had reached the waterhole, so all hope of finding the herds of goats was at an end, and he regretted not having made an earlier start. After having drunk his fill he felt somewhat refreshed and the desire for food grew stronger; the sun had crossed the sky twice since he had last eaten and he felt weak. Food, therefore, must be secured before the sun rose again, otherwise he would be forced to hunt by daylight,

which was not at all to his liking. For some time he wandered about in search of any possible quarry. Twice he tried unsuccessfully to stalk some antelope. His hind leg was painfully stiff and hindered his movements so that he could not make the quick rush that was necessary if he managed finally to creep within a few lengths of his intended victim. At last a stroke of unexpected good luck came. Two other lions, strangers in the district, had made a kill and were enjoying their meal when Simba came upon them. Surrounding them was the usual assortment of jackals and hyenas, waiting for their share of the feast.

According to the custom of the wilds, a lion may not share in another's kill, at least not so long as they are present, and the new-comer was received with most unfriendly growls as he ventured too close to the feeding pair. There was nothing for it but to take his place among the lowly crew and wait with what patience he possessed until the two lions had satisfied their hunger and gone off for the drink which is always indulged in after a feed. For what seemed an interminable time he watched the scene with envious eyes by the light of the rising moon in the company of the band of hungry scavengers; and they watched him with dislike, for he would take a large share of what was left of the dead hartebeest, and there would be difficulty in getting more than a mouthful or two

for the many that had gathered from near and far, and as the time passed their numbers were steadily increasing. The moment came at last when the two lions, having eaten their fill, got up and reluctantly moved away. This was the signal for a mad rush towards the carcase by the horde of scavengers, who for the moment forgot the presence of the injured lion. Less active than the smaller beasts, he was the last to arrive, but he came in with a roar of anger and, striking right and left with his great paws, scattered the mob, snarling and crying with pain and disappointed fury. Several had managed to secure a scrap of meat, for which they had to fight vigorously, and unless they were quick enough to swallow what they had taken, it was, in most cases, torn away from them. The lives of the wild creatures are not as easy and happy as some of us think. It is with most of them a constant fight for existence, fighting for food, fighting against enemies, always and for ever a struggle to keep alive. The slightest falling off in alertness, cunning and persistent endeavour spells disaster. No second chance is theirs as a rule. A failure is final. One sometimes wonders when people speak of the imprisoned animals in a zoo, whether they do, or do not, pay dearly for their life of peace and plenty. It is a difficult question to decide. According to some ideas, the sole object of an animal's life is a sufficiency

of food and sleep and immunity from danger. But this presumes a complete lack of imagination on the part of animals, and such a presumption is certainly open to discussion. Those of us who have spent many years among the wild animals find so much in their lives that points to imagination, which finds expression in their plans, and which seem to be well thought out rather than the result of impulse, and in their games, which are so much like the games of human beings, especially children.

The black-maned lion finished his meal without haste or worry. That the mob of jackals and hyenas were furious and impatient for their share of the feast mattered not at all to him. His was the right of might, and in the animal world this is generally supreme. When his hunger was completely satisfied he got up and stared at the hungry faces surrounding him and at the partly demolished carcase, as though regretting the fact that he was unable to eat it all. The suffering of the past days had made him ill-tempered and uncharitably disposed to all that came in his way. But the longing for a drink was stronger even than his desire to keep the scavengers away from what he himself did not need, and at last he moved away and left them to fight over the little that remained while he made his way to the nearest waterhole, and, having indulged in a long drink, he retired to a near-by scrubby

*donga* and slept until the glowing sky showed that another day was dawning.

He then got up, stretched himself, yawned, and decided that he felt very much better, and that after all his luck might have been far worse. He would have liked to stay in the *donga* for the rest of the day, but it was well to avoid the persistent attentions of the flies, and the wound, though rapidly healing, would still attract them if he stayed out in the daylight. Therefore there was nothing to do but return to his regular lair among the rocks.

The sun had scarcely cleared the distant range of mountains by the time he began to climb the gradual slope of the rocky hill. He walked slowly, for there was no need to hurry, and as he advanced he seemed to feel that all was not right. He saw nothing amiss and there was no actual scent of danger, and yet there was something in the air to arouse his suspicions, and so, instead of making directly to the den, he made his way to one side, with the intention of circling the rocky hill-top before venturing into his dark abode.

Suddenly the stillness of the quiet morning was disturbed by a whirr of wings and the shrill cries of a flock of guinea-fowl that rose some little distance away. The lion stopped. That his suspicions were well founded was proved by the frightened birds.

The question was, what had alarmed them? A leopard, of course, might have been trying to catch one for his breakfast, or even a serval cat or a hawk. Whatever it was he must find out, and caution was necessary, as there was always the chance that men might have come to waylay him as he approached his den. It might even be some of the natives, whose village he had visited with such sad results, who had tracked him down and were ready to avenge themselves by shooting those dreaded poison arrows which were more dangerous even than the white man's shots, for the slightest touch from these tiny darts is fatal, while the rifle-shot must hit a vital place to be effective.

Simba decided that a waiting policy would be safer than a tour of inspection, for among the scattered rocks enemies might easily hide and not be discovered until he was too close to them, so he stood in the shadow of a large grey rock and awaited developments. For some little time nothing occurred and he began to wonder whether he had been unnecessarily alarmed. The rising sun was beginning to warm the air and with this increasing warmth flies buzzed about and settled on the wound in his leg. This made him impatient, and he was on the verge of abandoning what was proving to be a long wait when, not far away, he heard voices. So it was, after all, men who were waiting for him, and in his present condition he felt

that it would be wiser to slip away unseen rather than risk an encounter. The men were evidently between him and his home, so any move in that direction was out of the question. He turned and, keeping his great body as low as possible, began to creep quietly down the hill, when suddenly he heard the barking of dogs; this caused him to turn, and he lay with his head towards the disturbance. The next moment there was a sound of voices, of men calling, of dogs barking, and, to his astonishment, the growls of lions; at that moment a shot rang out loud and sharp, then another and still another, and he saw two lionesses break away from a tangle of scrub between him and the men and start down the hill. Then one, with a terrifying growl, fell as a shot struck her. As she went down several dogs rushed forward, followed by some men, and the lion waited to see no more. The place was becoming too dangerous for him, as the enemy was but a short distance away and decreasing that distance too rapidly for his liking. The second lioness passed him at a bound and he followed her in a cautious way, keeping rocks and bushes between himself and the enemy as much as possible. Several shots were fired at the lioness as she showed herself from time to time while making her way rapidly from cover to cover.

Fortunately the dogs had stopped behind to worry

the wounded lioness, so after a short run Simba, having cleared the immediate zone of danger, joined the frightened lioness, who, up to then, had scarcely noticed him in her eagerness to escape the hunters. As they were not yet safe from pursuit the pair made their way down the hill-side and across the plains to a large papyrus swamp which would afford ample protection from both men and dogs. The men would scarcely venture into this dense tangle, as by doing so they would be at the mercy of the lions, and the dogs, should they follow, would be easily outwitted or killed if they became too venturesome.

Simba was tired after the excitement, and, feeling that there was little chance of trouble, he left his new acquaintance to stand guard while he sought a dry spot where the papyrus was so thick that it afforded ample shade, and there he lay down and almost immediately fell asleep. The lioness, who was more cautious, remained on the edge of the swamp, where she had an uninterrupted view of the plains and of the rocky hill where she so nearly met her death. There she lay until the heat of the noonday sun caused her to seek a more sheltered place, and she followed the trail of the black-maned lion until she came to where he was. He had, of course, heard her coming, even though her soft paws had made scarcely any sound, and he stood up to greet her. This was, in fact,

their introduction, and they licked each other after the manner of their kind and so became mates.

Together they lay down on the soft bed of dry papyrus and slept for several hours. Then the peace of the afternoon was rudely broken by the barking of dogs.

It might be well to explain here what had happened and how it was that Simba's home had been visited by some very determined hunters on this particular day. Two young fellows, who had a farm not far away, were joined by a friend who had come to see Kenya and who, above all things, wanted to shoot at least one lion. To do this would, in his opinion, brand him a real sportsman. To give him the opportunity he desired the other two took him out for a shoot. With dogs and native gun-bearers they had started out the previous day and before long had come upon the fresh spoor of the two lionesses. After following this for several hours they came to a small rocky *donga* where, in the thick grass and bushes, their quarry was found by the dogs. As luck would have it, the lionesses were aroused from their sleep by the scent of the hunters, who had approached down-wind, and without waiting to see who or what was coming they made their escape. It was then late in the afternoon. The men, finding that the pair had made off, followed the freshly made trail without difficulty at first. But after a while it

led them through some dry rock-strewn country where the dogs were frequently at fault, and the chase became slow and tedious. Eventually, when the sun was setting red and low, the trail cleared the rocky ground and was followed easily across a stretch of open grassy country, and on to Simba's hill. By the time the men reached it darkness had set in and no more could be done, so they, in their enthusiasm, determined to spend the night near by with the intention of resuming the hunt as soon as daylight made it possible. Then, as we know, they succeeded in shooting one of the two lionesses and were greatly disappointed that it was not a male that they had killed. But one of the party caught sight of Simba as he followed the lioness; it was but a momentary glimpse and, owing to the rocky nature of the hill-side, it was impossible to say which way he had gone.

As soon as the dead lioness had been skinned, the dogs were put on the fresh trail, but by chance they followed Simba's spoor down to the waterhole where he had drunk and near which he had slept, and then on to where he had eaten of the meal which the other lions had left for him. By this time the men realised, as they would have done sooner had they been more experienced in the ways of lions, that they were on the wrong trail, so they returned to the hill and there the dogs took up the trail to the papyrus swamp. The

problem before them was not an easy one, for the swamp was several hundred yards wide and a mile or more in length. To beat it, therefore, would be very difficult, as, with only three guns, the lions would be almost sure to escape. The new arrival suggested setting fire to the papyrus, but with the high wind that was blowing this would be dangerous, as it would spread to the plains and risk the lives of the native cattle that were feeding there in scattered herds. It was decided to see what could be done in the way of beating with the five dogs and native gun-bearers; the latter were not exactly bubbling over with enthusiasm at this suggestion. They were not cowards, but papyrus is treacherous, and there was no knowing what might be encountered in that large swamp. Even the dogs showed a strong inclination to keep close to the edge, and it was only with the utmost difficulty that they were finally persuaded to go far in; and as they went they found many confusing scents and so they barked as though to give each other courage. It was this barking which disturbed the sleeping lions. They were disturbed but not frightened, for so long as no fire forced them out of the protection of the swamp, they could amuse themselves by doubling back and forth and so keep the dogs in a state of constant bewilderment. Now it happened that a herd of some thirty or forty buffalo

were taking their daily sleep in the papyrus, and if the sportsmen had been observant they would have seen the white buffalo birds—almost certain indication of the presence of these animals—at the farther end of the swamp; but they were thinking only of the lions. The wind was blowing directly towards them, and the buffalo, always quick to take alarm, lost no time in coming to investigate the origin of this disturbance. If there is one thing in Africa that is upsetting to the nerves of even the most seasoned sportsmen it is the sight of a herd of buffalo that is looking for trouble.

One of the three white men had, rather foolishly, undertaken to make his way through the papyrus to the other side in case the lions should break in that direction. Of the other two, one was to keep more or less abreast of the dogs, while the other went to the lower end of the swamp to meet the lions if they went quickly ahead of the dogs. The three men had separated and were making for their respective stations when the buffalo were seen coming by those on the outside of the swamp. The one who had entered the papyrus could, of course, see no farther than a few yards, owing to the denseness of the growth. The others, realising the danger he was in and the necessity for quick action, fired a shot to attract his attention and called out loudly that buffalo were coming. No

further information was necessary. The wretched fellow, almost imprisoned in the tangled vegetation, floundered about in his mad desire to get out into the open. It was like a nightmare, and he felt every moment that the dreaded buffalo were on top of him, for they can travel through even the thickest papyrus as easily as a rabbit can run through a field of wheat. The two men on the outside had come together again and were standing by, ready to open fire on the herd if necessary, but not at all anxious to do so.

It was at this time that the lions began to feel somewhat nervous. They could see nothing, but could hear a good deal going on in front, behind and on one side; dogs barking nervously, men shouting, and a crashing sound all at once. The idea of the little game of hide-and-seek with the dogs had lost its interest. A stealthy retreat seemed far more sensible, so the two made their way with what speed was possible away from the sound of the rapidly near-ing crashing. In their haste they paid small heed to where they were going, when, to their very great surprise, they found themselves suddenly within a few feet of their enemy, man; and this man, who had apparently lost all interest in lion hunting, was making the most frantic efforts to free himself from the mass of tangled papyrus and wire-like creepers that tied themselves round his feet and impeded his actions.

It was his first experience of hunting in Africa, and he was not enjoying it. People had always given him the idea that everything was so easy. That you walked about on the clear open plains, selected what you wanted, and shot it. This present experience was not at all what he had counted on. He had never been over-anxious to hunt buffalo and he thoroughly objected to their hunting him. In the midst of his misery two ferocious lions of gigantic size (at least, so they seemed) appeared without warning. For a moment they hesitated, then, being as much surprised as the wretched man, bolted past, one on either side. He was so paralysed with fright that he never even thought of shooting until the pair had disappeared from view, and then the thought barely flitted through his bewildered mind. His friends were calling to him to hurry, as if that were necessary, for there was an appalling noise as though of a charge of cavalry, and most unpleasantly close. Then came the sound of several shots, and the crashing ceased. With renewed effort he broke his way through the tangle, and a moment later found himself in the open, a disturbed, dripping and badly shaken man. As quickly as he could he made his way to where his friends with their gun-bearers stood watching the fear-inspiring herd of buffalo. The only wise thing to do was to get away while the going was good, and without more ado the

party turned and were soon mere specks in the distance. The new-comer had had all he wanted for one day, and not even the thought of the magnificent black-maned lion could tempt him back to that papyrus swamp. Shooting tame pheasants in English covers was more in his line; at least so he thought at the moment when the memory of that experience in the swamp was still so vividly impressed on his mind.

Simba and his newly found mate, who for the sake of convenience we will in the future call Bébé (meaning girl, woman, or wife in the vernacular), were entirely pleased with the way events had worked out. Their afternoon sleep had been somewhat rudely interrupted, it is true, but there was still time for another snooze before evening. The buffalo had retired into the centre of the swamp and had posted sentries to guard against attack. Two of their number had received slight flesh wounds, but they were not serious, and, beyond causing a certain amount of discomfort, they would soon be forgotten. The swamp was once more peaceful and very hot when the lions, having found a suitable place, settled themselves for a short sleep. With the setting of the sun they awoke and made their toilets, then, after indulging in a drink from one of the many pools, they left the kindly shelter of the waving, feathery green papyrus and started off to see what could be found for dinner.

Owing to the pursuit by the hunters, Bébé had been forced to go without food during the previous night, therefore she was hungry.

Simba was glad that he had the lioness with him as it made the question of food very much easier; for the present she would do the hunting and he would offer what assistance he could. The results would be divided and all would be well. To show his feelings, he stopped for a short time on a large flat rock and, with the lioness close beside him, broke the stillness of the twilight by a succession of mighty roars, which seemed to tell the whole country that he had secured a mate, and further, that he defied anyone to take her from him, also that he would have to beg no food from any other animal. It was a roar combining defiance with satisfaction and he waited for an answer, but none came. Again he made the air vibrate with his great deep-throated voice which started with such volume and gradually died down to a mere murmur. Then in the far distance came the reply. This seemed to satisfy his desire for publicity, and, following close behind his mate, the pair started on the serious business of the night—the search for food.

Twilight had given place to darkness, for the sun had set about half an hour ago, and the sky was gradually losing its wonderful luminous green colour and becoming that deep, mysterious, undefinable velvety

blue of the tropical night, with stars in their countless millions appearing as though by magic.

The air was sweet and cool, with a faint breeze that was soft and refreshing. Sound carried far on such a night, and the lions moved as noiselessly as a pair of spectres. After proceeding for some distance the strange barking of zebra broke the stillness of the night. Zebra is good lion food, and as the hunters were working against the breeze their presence was not known to the herd of feeding animals. The lions stopped for a time to consider the situation and then Simba left his mate and walked leisurely away, not towards the zebra, but to one side; having gone perhaps half a mile, he turned and headed up-wind until he had passed well beyond the herd; he then turned and continued his walk very slowly, not stopping till he found himself directly to the windward of the zebra, who were several hundred yards away. From this position he gave voice to a roar, as though to signal to Bébé, who was still where he had left her. Having done this, he wandered about in what appeared to be a very aimless way, but which actually had a definite meaning. The zebra soon got his scent, which was so faint that it did not cause sufficient alarm to make them run away; all they did was to feed slowly in the opposite direction, that is to say, towards the waiting lioness, without suspecting that they were in reality

walking into a trap. This method of hunting takes time but is usually successful, and within an hour or less Simba heard the distant thud of a falling body, followed immediately by the clatter of many hoofs. These sounds conveyed to him the desired information, and without a moment's hesitation he trotted directly back to his mate. As he expected, he found her standing by her kill, and together they enjoyed their meal, finishing just as the usual assortment of scavengers began to arrive.

It is strange how quickly these prowlers of the veldt get the scent of a fresh kill, and how they seem to appear from all directions in an incredibly short time. Whether they come by scent alone or also by sound it is difficult to say, but the scent theory seems to be scarcely satisfying, as the scavengers frequently come down-wind, and one is forced to the conclusion that animals have some way of long-distance communication about which we know nothing. With vultures and eagles it is different, as there is no doubt that their wonderful eyesight accounts for the way in which they discover a carcase, and one bird sees another coming to it, so that each one, however high it may be in the sky, acts as a link in the chain of information. Birds of prey have little, if any, sense of smell and so rely entirely on their keen eyes for finding their food, whether it be dead or alive.

Simba and his mate, satisfied completely with the events of the day and night, left the remains of the zebra to be fought over by the ever-hungry hyenas and jackals, and made their way slowly towards the nearest pool of water. Along a game trail they walked, the lioness in the lead and the black-maned lion following so close that his great head was against the flanks of his mate. On arriving at the pool, Simba drank first, while Bébé, always the more cautious of the two, kept a look-out; when her mate had finished, she came to the pool and, crouching low, lapped up the turbid water. Having satisfied their thirst, as lions nearly always do soon after feeding, they left the pool and went across the grassy plains until a rocky mound was found; there they lay down close together and slept peacefully until shortly before dawn.

A new home must be found, as Simba's old one would be dangerous now that white men had apparently discovered it; so the pair wandered off in search of a suitable place, after Simba had broken the quiet of the early morning by several deep roars. Three or four possible situations were examined before the sun rose, but none proved altogether to their liking, so the pair returned to the papyrus swamp where they had spent the previous day, and there they slept until evening. Towards dusk they resumed their house-hunting activities and eventually succeeded in finding



A NEW HOME MUST BE FOUND

SO THE PAIR WANDERED OFF



what they wanted. It was a deep cave on the rocky slope of a steep *donga* or ravine, the entrances well concealed among bushes and loose rocks. The fact that there were two entrances, a large one and another that was very small and inconspicuous, made it all the more desirable, as it practically eliminated any chance of getting trapped in case of an attack by man, who might try to smoke them out. An investigation showed that the place had been occupied before by lion, but not recently, as all signs were old. Even the dried pieces of bones, remains of cubs' meals, were scarcely visible in their covering of dust. Outside the main opening a flat gravelly space would serve as a place for a sun-bath. It commanded a view of the *donga* and was therefore safe from a surprise visit of any possible enemy. Altogether the two lions were pleased with their find, and Simba, in a mighty roar, announced to all within hearing that this was to be his home.

Several months passed without any particular incident; life was peaceful, food fairly abundant, and only very occasionally did white hunters visit the neighbourhood. Then one evening, when starting out in search of food, they came upon a young lioness wandering about. She was invited to join in the chase, and having shared the meal, decided to stay with Simba and Bébé. Lions usually have two and some-

times three mates, so this was quite in accordance with the correct order of things.

The next marked change in Simba's life was when Bébé presented him with four babies—four little tawny-grey fluffy, spotted and barred cubs, whose eyes were open soon after birth. The arrival of this family meant that for a short time at least Simba and Bébé the Second, as we will call his younger wife, would have to do their hunting together and bring home food for the mother. After a few days Bébé felt that she could leave her youngsters and join in the hunt, but frequently the other lioness remained behind as nurse and guardian, going out only when Bébé had eaten her meal and taken her drink. Simba in the meantime would stay by the kill to keep off the inevitable scavengers and await the arrival of his second mate. On these occasions he would frequently give forth his blood-curdling roars, whether as a signal to show where he was or for the joy of hearing his own voice, no one can say for certain.

Usually the hunting was carried on at night, but there were times when luck went wrong and the day dawned before they succeeded in making a kill. When this happened, Simba found it no easy matter guarding the food, for not only would the hyenas and jackals become increasingly bold in daylight, but there were the vultures that came in their hundreds: red-headed

ones that looked like misshapen turkeys, some with black bare heads hideously naked, and others of greater size with long, whitish, snake-like necks. They would all come to fight for a share of the feast. If trees were convenient, they would be packed so closely with the vultures that their branches were bent down almost to the breaking-point. All available perches were used, from ant-hills to small bushes, and those who could find no better place stood in a circle on the ground. Their numbers were increased from time to time, when, from the depths of the blue sky, specks would quickly become birds which dropped with astonishing speed and a loud singing of the wings as they cut through the air. Among these scavengers would be, perhaps, a few grotesque marabou storks, with their immense beaks and dressed in black and white clothes, like old men in tail coats and white shirts. In a dignified way they walked about trying to get to a point of vantage. All these hungry creatures, feathered and furred, would wait impatiently for Simba to leave, beguiling the time by settling disputes between themselves in a noisy fashion. The black-maned lion appeared to pay not the slightest attention to any of the hungry crew, unless they became too bold, when a low growl of warning was usually sufficient to keep them at their proper distance. If the growl did not serve its purpose, a quick blow with his paw or a snap of the jaws

would be employed with good effect. When Bébé the Second came, Simba would stand by and see that she was not interrupted; but the moment the meal was finished and the two lions left the scene, pandemonium reigned: birds fought beasts and beasts fought birds, not one in a dozen would get a mouthful of food, and yet in an incredibly short time no sign, save the trampled grass, remained of the feast and the fight, and the presence of the few vultures that had fed sitting about preening their bedraggled, blood-smeared feathers. All the animals betook themselves to their various homes, while the birds who had fared badly soared in ever-widening circles high above the land, searching with their marvellous eyes for any sign of death and food.

When the cubs were still small balls of fur they were taken out from time to time from their dark home and allowed to play on the smooth gravel space in front of the den. On these occasions the three older ones would lie down and keep a sharp look-out while the youngsters played about, rolling on the ground and climbing all over their devoted mother. The whole scene made a picture of rare beauty, and one not often witnessed by man.

By the time the cubs were a few weeks old, a great fire raged across the plains and spread over many miles. As a result of the grass being destroyed, the

animals, on which the lion family relied for its food, were driven away in search of pasturage. Simba and his two mates were faced with a serious problem. The cubs were not old enough to undertake a journey, so it meant going a long way to find the necessary meat. In the course of one of these trips they visited a farm that was several miles away. Here they found that the cattle were so well protected by a high stockade that it was quite impossible to get at them, but they discovered a dog with two half-grown puppies back of an outhouse. Driven by the necessity for food, the unfortunate dog was killed and by accident also one of the pups. Then, as though to make amends, Bébé took the remaining one in her mouth and carried it with the utmost care back with her to the den. There for over a month she nursed it with the same solicitude that she bestowed on her own offspring. The puppy, quite content in this strange environment, played with the cubs and in every way became one of the party. As ill-luck would have it, illness came to the happy family, and within a few days the puppy and one of the male cubs died. It is a strange thing that lions seldom succeed in rearing more than half of their youngsters, and still more strange that it is usually the males that die. This accounts for the fact that while the proportion of male cubs exceeds that of the females, there are more adult lionesses than lions,

with the result that the male lion more often than not has two mates. This is true of most species of the larger animals in Africa, and indeed elsewhere, for the females are nearly always in excess of the males, and frequently this disproportion is astonishingly great.

Shortly after the event of the great fire the short rains commenced, and the burnt ground a few days later turned from black to tender green. Grass and flowers appeared as though by magic, for rain in the tropics is the fairy wand that converts death into life. With the fresh young grass the herds of zebra and antelope returned to the neighbourhood of Simba's home and life once more became easy. When the three remaining cubs were about five months old they were taken by their mother on their first hunt. Not, of course, that they were expected to assist in the killing, but for exercise and perhaps incidentally to learn how to take care of themselves. The fact that it was easier to take them to their food than to bring the food to them may be after all the chief reason that their mother took them out. But we like to think that young animals are actually taught by their parents what they should or should not do, whereas it is very doubtful whether we are right in our ideas.

The knowledge of how to obtain food and how to seek protection under almost all conditions is really instinctive. Birds do not have to be taught to make

nesses to the same pattern as others of their species have done for countless ages. Hens certainly do not teach young ducks that they have hatched how to swim. A young pig roots for food even when he has never seen it done by another pig, and so one can go on giving examples without end, and we come back to the knowledge that a young lion would hunt, though he had never accompanied his mother, just as certainly as a cat will catch mice without being taught.

On the night when the cubs had their first long outing they went out with the whole family, and when they came to where a mixed herd of zebra and antelope were feeding, Simba and Béb  the Second used the tactics, already mentioned, of driving the animals by going up-wind and so influencing them by scent towards where the mother and her cubs lay in waiting. The result was as usual successful, and within half an hour B    had made a kill. The young hunters, crouching low in the grass, had watched it happen and immediately rushed in with great excitement, and began worrying the dead hartebeest. Their mother watched their unsuccessful attempts to get at the meat for some time and then came to the rescue and broke the tough skin for them; and not until the three youngsters had satisfied their hunger did the "grown-ups" take their share. This was the beginning of many similar nights of hunting, but success did not

always come, and frequently they had to make long journeys in search of their quarry.

Owing to the failure of the rains to last the usual three weeks the ground soon dried up again, with the result that there was a dearth of food, consequently the game became more and more scarce as it moved to other and better pasturage. The lion family found it necessary to leave their comfortable den and follow the herds. They became wanderers and made their home wherever they chanced to be: sometimes it was among the rocks of a *kopje*, sometimes on a reed-covered island in the bed of a dry river, or in a clump of brush on the edge of the plains, or in a papyrus swamp. They were not particular as it was the dry season and they could always find some place where there was shelter from the perpetual sunshine. Life on the whole was peaceful and pleasant until one day, when serious trouble came to the family. They were sleeping in a small bed of reeds at the bottom of a shallow *donga* when they were awakened by the sound of men talking. Bébé crept out to the edge of the cover to see what was happening. What she saw struck terror to her heart, for there were white men and natives on every side of the *donga*. To escape unnoticed was evidently impossible, and she realised that she and her family were fairly trapped, for the men had with them several dogs. To make matters

worse, one of the natives who was scarcely fifty yards away caught sight of her and in his excitement called out the information to the white hunters. Up till then the idea of searching the *donga* was on the chance that it might contain lion. Now that they were known to be there preparations were made immediately for a systematic drawing of the cover. First of all, it must be completely surrounded so that no matter which way the lion broke out there would be a rifle at hand. Then the dogs would be put in to rout the trapped animals. It was bound to be a fight to the finish, with the advantage almost entirely with the men. Bébé, realising that she had been observed, made her way back to her family, who were all crouching low in the thick reeds, and there they all waited anxiously for whatever might happen. Nothing could be seen of the enemy owing to the height of the reeds; only on scent and sound could they depend for information. It happened that there was a large thorn tree on the side of the *donga* and not far from the bed of reeds. A native climbed this tree and from the elevated position was able to get a glimpse of the lions, and he called to one of the white men to come up and try a shot. A moment later there was a sharp report and one of the cubs gave a low groan, shivered and lay absolutely still. Another and yet another shot rang out and Bébé felt a stinging blow in her side. Things

were getting too hot for the family and, crouching as low as possible, they changed their position. Bébé and her two remaining cubs went one way, Simba and the other lioness going each in a different direction. The moving of the grass showed the hunters what was taking place and several more shots were fired without result, and the lions again lay flat and waited. The men, not knowing what had happened, whether their shots had taken effect, or indeed how many lions were in the reeds, were somewhat at a loss as to how to act. They waited for some time and nothing moved, so, thinking that perhaps the lions were either killed or severely wounded, they decided to let the dogs go into the cover. The barking and growling that followed almost immediately told the story of what was going on, and it was only too evident that the lions were very much alive. In vain did the men try to call off the three dogs. They might as well have called to the sun to stop shining. Two of the white men, anxious to save their dogs, threw caution to the winds and rushed in to where the fight was going on with terrific vigour between Bébé and the dogs. Simba at this moment thought he saw a chance of making his escape. There was so much confusion that he might, with luck, get away unnoticed, and with head lowered he crept through the reeds quickly and quietly. There were sounds in every direction as men, white

and black, broke their way into the thick cover, the blacks shouting at the top of their voices and hitting tins and sticks to make as much of a din as possible in order to protect themselves from attack. Simba, going in the direction which seemed most quiet, suddenly found himself face to face with one of the white hunters. Instant action was necessary, and before the man could fire a shot he sprang. The man ducked, but not in time to save himself from a severe stroke of the great paw which caught him on the shoulder, ripped the clothing and tore the flesh. The man fell under the impact, and Simba, thinking only of escape, rushed through the reeds up the slope of the hill at his very best speed. Several shots followed him but all without effect, and so it was that he eluded his enemies. Bébé in the meantime was carrying on a mighty fight against the dogs. One she killed outright and at that moment two white men came upon her. One of them immediately fired and she fell, the shot tearing through her body. Thoughts of her two cubs, coupled with the stinging pain, gave her the courage of despair, and she sprang with lightning speed on the man who had fired the shot. Being struck full on the chest he went down like a stone beneath her great weight, crushed to instantaneous death. At the same moment the other man, with his rifle almost touching her tawny body, fired with fatal

effect, and Bébé lay dead on the man she had killed in defence of her young. The other lioness was shot as she tried to make her escape from the reeds and the two cubs fell victims to the dogs, helped by the men. So ended the hunt; a tragedy for both the hunter and the hunted. Two lionesses and two cubs, one dog and a man killed and another man seriously injured.

Simba, weary and alone, watched from a rocky knoll the procession of men that made their way slowly across the yellow undulating hills. Bitterness filled his heart, for his family was gone for ever. He even meditated vengeance on those who had so needlessly destroyed his happiness, and he followed the trail of the men for several miles in the hopes of finding an opportunity to attack; but no chance offered itself, and in the end he left the trail and took himself off to the neighbouring hills to begin once more a life of solitude. That he had escaped injury, thanks to his own quickness of action, was his only satisfaction, and under the circumstances it afforded him but slight gratification. Among the rocks he lay down for the rest of the day, and when evening came he visited a waterhole and drank freely. Then, impelled by a desire to know what had happened to his family, even though in his heart he knew that he had lost them, he made his way back to the fatal reed-bed. He found

his worst fears realised, for no trail of scent led from the *donga*, and when he entered it the story of disaster was told only too plainly. There was nothing that he could do, so after a time he wandered away without purpose or thought of where he would go or what he would do. To eat he had no desire, so he slowly roamed the country, stopping now and then to give vent to his feelings by a mighty roar which would gradually die away like the cry of a lost soul. The long night passed at last, and with the coming of day he found a well-secluded place in the tangled brush on the side of a hill, and there he settled himself to sleep and forgetfulness.

His thoughts towards men were that they were the easiest of prey, easiest so far as the actual stalking and killing were concerned, but it meant incurring serious risk of being shot or speared. One night it happened that in the course of his wanderings while going through a belt of trees on the bank of a large river he caught sight of the glow of a fire. As he was working with the wind, he did not get the scent of man; with great caution he moved forward and soon came to the outskirts of a camp. Between him and the tents there was a large wood fire round which a number of almost naked natives were squatting. They were a happy lot and were singing one of the curious songs of the country. One man would extemporise the

words, relating to some recent event of the white hunters they were with, then at the end of each verse they would all join in the chorus. Simba stood in the shadow of some bushes and watched the scene for a long time, trying to make up his mind whether or not to take advantage of the situation and get an easy meal. The risk was not great, he considered, and after a while he decided to try his luck. The men were so busy with their song that they were entirely unconscious of the soft-footed creature that stalked them with such care, until suddenly there was a curious rushing sound followed by a scream of terror, and one of the wretched men was seen to disappear into the darkness. Filled with fear, the other men called loudly to their white masters. The whole camp was a confusion of rushing, chattering men, which finally subsided when the white hunters took charge. Armed with lanterns and burning brands taken hastily from the fire, they all went from the camp, following the trail that was only too clearly marked. For some distance they made their way through the trees and undergrowth, on which the flickering light of lantern and torch cast an ever-moving glow so that the shadows danced about in a fantastic manner. The lion had not gone far with his gruesome burden before he saw the lights of the approaching procession, and, feeling that discretion was the better part of valour,

he dropped his victim and took himself off into the protecting darkness.

For a year or more after this unfortunate event Simba's life passed without any incident worth mentioning. His was a restless spirit and he seldom stayed long in any one place, and when possible avoided any neighbourhood where men lived. White and black, he hated them all, hated and distrusted them above all things, so that he dared not trust himself in their vicinity for fear that he might be tempted to disregard his usual caution and demand punishment from them for all that they had done to spoil his life.

Frequently he found himself hunted by man, but he had grown wise and always succeeded in eluding his enemies. He learned by experience that roaring had the effect of attracting those who sought to kill him, and so he decided to abandon his vocal efforts.<sup>1</sup>

Age was beginning to tell on this black-maned lion, and he found it increasingly difficult to kill the food he required. One night while out in search of game the wind brought to him the scent of something dead. He decided to investigate the origin of the odour, for he was not above playing the part of scavenger; but as he drew nearer the scent of the fairly fresh

<sup>1</sup> It has become noticeable in East Africa, especially in the more inhabited regions, that though there are plenty of lion it is seldom that their roars are heard, and one is forced to the conclusion that the habit is being more or less abandoned as a protective measure.—AUTHOR.

kill was mixed with other odours, among which he recognised that of his enemy, man. For a long time he stood still and listened, but no sound broke the stillness of the moonlit night. He came closer, and as he did so the various smells became stronger and more confusing. Man must be avoided, but the meat was tempting, and he came still closer, until at last he was within sight of a dead zebra. Yet he dared not risk touching it, for he was almost certain that there was a man somewhere near by. It was a thoroughly tantalising situation, and, to make it worse, he saw a hyena and two jackals making repeated visits to the carcass from which they tore pieces of meat and immediately ran off, as though frightened, and devoured the stolen morsels some distance away. Simba watched for a long time, and though hungry, he finally decided to resist the temptation and go elsewhere in search of food. The following night he returned, irresistibly attracted by the strong odour of the dead zebra, for lions like meat that is tainted. He was much surprised to find that it had not been eaten by vultures during the day. Hunger made him less cautious than on the previous night, as he had not been able to make a kill, and after watching for a short while he went slowly towards the tempting morsel, driving the other scavengers away as he approached. His first thought was to drag the carcass

away from the suspicious scent of man, but this proved impossible as it seemed to be firmly secured to the ground; so he sat down and commenced eating. Scarcely had he taken a couple of bites, when, with a noise like a gun going off, there was a terrific flash of light, brighter even than lightning. For a moment he was blinded, but it did not take him long to recover, and off he went as fast as he could, thoroughly frightened and very much disgusted at losing the chance of a meal. After going for some distance he stopped to consider things. Perhaps it might be well to wait until daylight and then return cautiously and see what was going on. It was after midnight, so he had to wait only about five hours, and these soon passed. With the coming of dawn he walked slowly towards the object of his desires, but stopped in some scrub a few hundred yards away, and soon after the sun rose he saw two men come out of a thick bush quite near the zebra. They walked about for a short time and then to Simba's relief they went off and were soon out of sight. Before they had disappeared large numbers of vultures began to arrive, and he watched them come unmolested to the carcase and begin to tear at it after the manner of their kind. This seemed to show that there was no further danger to fear, so Simba trotted quickly to the kill, and after some difficulty in driving away the birds, he attacked

the odoriferous meat with the greatest gusto. Scarcely had he finished his meal than he saw several men appear against the skyline some distance away. No further hint was needed and he immediately moved off to safer quarters. He did not, of course, know that he had been photographed by flashlight during the night, and that he had never been in any real danger, so long as he did not make himself troublesome.

By the time that another year had passed Simba had nearly reached his allotted span of life; he was about eleven or twelve years old, his teeth were no longer as sharp as in the days of his prime, his striking power was waning, and his declining strength rendered it impossible for him to make the lightning rushes on which he had relied when making a kill, so that more often than not he went hungry. His place was among the scavengers of the plains and hills. If he was fortunate enough to find where other lions had killed, he would stand meekly and wait among his more lowly companions while those who were in the full glory of their strength ate their meal in a leisurely way. Then at last there came a day when even the effort to walk to the drinking-pool was more than he could attempt. For three days no food had passed his lips, and he knew, as animals always know, that the end was close upon him. Slowly he made his way to a secluded place among the grey rocks, and there he

lay down in the light yellow grass to sleep that last long sleep. No longer would the yellow plains see the great beast prowling about throughout the nights, no longer would the waterholes be visited by the old king, nor the hills hear the echo of his mighty voice, for Simba, the Black-maned Lion, had passed away.



# MBOGO, THE BUFFALO



## MBOGO,<sup>1</sup> THE BUFFALO

ONE day, many years ago, when the white man was beginning to find his way into what was then British East Africa, the tropical sun rose as usual and painted the great plains a brilliant gold. For countless miles stretched the yellow plains, level in parts and gently undulating in others. In the distance, misty and dim, range after range of mountains could be seen, and far above, as though not belonging to this earth, was the great snow-capped flattened summit of the mighty Kilimanjaro, separated from its more lowly neighbours and the rest of the world by a wreath of pearly clouds.

On the vast plains thousands of animals were feeding, and they belonged to many species. The masses of large, black, solidly built creatures were the African Buffalo,<sup>2</sup> and among them was Mbogo, the baby who had but recently come into the world. Vultures in their hundreds had sailed round and

<sup>1</sup> Mbogo is pronounced as M-bogo, the M being the value of a *short*, or half syllable.

<sup>2</sup> The fact that the buffalo are depicted as being in the open during the day may be criticised, but in the days before the epidemic of rinderpest during the latter part of the last century, it was the custom of these animals to spend most of their time on the open plains.—AUTHOR.

round far up in the sky, not to welcome the new arrival, but to find out whether he lived or died. With their uncanny instinct they knew that young animals occasionally die soon after birth, and so they came to watch and hope for the worst. But Mbogo was a sturdy baby who showed not the slightest inclination to leave the world into which he had so recently come, and eventually the birds took their departure, and the new arrival tottered about on his wobbly legs as though not quite certain what he was supposed to do. A funny little fellow he was, with a good coat of hair, not black like the grown-ups, but of a brownish colour. He looked about him, and saw that the immediate world was filled with beings that were all more or less like his mother. Some were even larger, and bore immense horns, that dropped down the sides of the cheeks and then turned up with a graceful curve; others again were smaller than his mother, but none were as small as himself, and certainly none were so unsteady on their legs. He walked a few steps away from his parent and immediately felt lonely, so he returned and was caressed and licked all over. This gave him a queer feeling which he did not understand, so he did what his developing intelligence prompted him to do and lay down and was soon fast asleep, while his great black mother stood guard to see that no harm should

befall her child. The sleep lasted but a short time, and when Mbogo awoke he felt that new strength had been given to him. He stood up and his legs seemed more firm, so that they supported his rather thin body without wobbling too much.

The morning, well advanced by now, was becoming hot, and the little fellow began to feel uncomfortable without knowing exactly why; but his watchful mother knew, and she moved so that her shadow fell on him and made him more at ease. Later on in the day the herd, which numbered a hundred or more, began to move. They walked slowly, feeding now and then as they went, and Mbogo walked and trotted alongside of his mother, wondering why it was necessary to go such a long distance when he was perfectly content to remain in one place. For half an hour the great black herd continued in their leisurely way and then they came to a series of muddy pools in the bed of an otherwise dry river. The little fellow remained close to his parent and watched with astonishment the other animals going into the water. He saw them lie down in the bubbling mud so that only their heads and shoulders were visible.

Two old bulls, acting as sentries, stood some distance from the waterholes and kept a sharp look-out against any possible surprise attack. It seemed an unnecessary precaution, for what enemy would risk an

encounter with so powerful a herd? But buffalo are cautious animals, and though safe from most living creatures, there is always a chance that natives or even lions might venture to assail them. The possibility was remote, but still it did exist; their flesh is liked by lion and by men, and in addition to this their hides are valuable for shields, which are part of the equipment of every native man, and no skin makes a better shield. Man, therefore, was the enemy they had most reason to fear.

For an hour or two Mbogo watched his brothers and sisters, uncles, aunts and cousins enjoying their wallow. Then one by one they came out and let the grey, slimy mud drip from their sturdy bodies. As there was little pasturage in the vicinity of the much-frequented waterholes, the herd moved off in search of good grass, and the little fellow found much less difficulty in keeping up the pace than when he had come to the river-bed that morning, for he was nearly a whole day old. The young of all the ruminant animals of the veldt and forest, whose food consists of grass or leaves, are well developed at birth and can walk almost immediately, and their strength increases with extraordinary rapidity.

For the first few weeks of his life Mbogo had little to worry him beyond the troublesome flies and ticks, which, at times, were very annoying. He was learn-

ing the usual things that must be known by all wild creatures. His A B C was all in accordance with nature and therefore not difficult to learn. Nothing of special importance happened to him until one day, when a venturesome lioness, who, with the inexperience of youth, thought that he would prove a toothsome morsel, and with this idea in her mind spent a long time waiting for an opportunity to catch him. It was necessary for her purpose that he should be well separated from his mother, but she was as usual always watching her offspring and he seldom went more than a few yards away. After a while the lioness grew impatient, for she was hungry, and very foolishly started her attack at the wrong moment, for the old cow made a sudden rush and struck her with terrific force. One of her horns pierced the young lioness's chest and inflicted a fatal wound, and Mbogo was saved; but he realised his mother's protecting power and the importance of keeping always close to her.

After this life went on for a time without incident. Food and water regulated the movements of the herd, and short migrations were made according to the dry and wet seasons. Gradually he lost his brown baby coat and grew a black one like his mother's, only longer and thicker. When he was about a year old, and was independent of his parent for his nourishment,

a great calamity visited the land. Many of the buffalo became stricken with a terrible disease known as the rinderpest, and one after another the wretched beasts died. Vultures in countless numbers followed the doomed herd, watching for the deaths which they seemed to know would occur. They grew so fat that they could scarcely fly. Other scavengers were to be seen at all times, overfed and lazy, and yet the carcasses of the plague-infected beasts were so numerous that not one in a dozen was touched and they dried up under the power of the tropical sun. Mbogo's herd, which had numbered over a hundred but a few weeks before, had dwindled down to less than a score. Other herds throughout the district and elsewhere in the country showed a similar fate, and it looked as though the day of the African buffalo would soon be over and the mighty beasts would be but a memory.<sup>1</sup>

One morning Mbogo saw that his mother was ill. It is difficult to say whether he knew exactly what was going to happen, but at any rate he stayed by her during that day and night, and the following morning she died. There were then only himself and four others alive out of the whole herd. Among the survivors was a bull with horns of unusual length;

<sup>1</sup> The terrible plague of the rinderpest swept over the country during the last few years of the last century. Its ravages were not confined to wild animals alone, chiefly buffalo, but to the cattle owned by the natives, and the losses suffered were appalling.

he was very old and almost hairless and his face a mass of deep wrinkles. For years past he had shared the leadership of the herd with another one who was now among the dead. He was a bad-tempered old creature but wise with the accumulated knowledge of many years. Times beyond number he had outwitted the native hunters, and on several occasions had narrowly escaped being killed by men with rifles who had thought to get possession of his massive and extra long horns. During the reign of terror caused by the rinderpest he had tried in vain to save those who had relied on his leadership. He had kept the herd moving in the hope of getting clear of the infected area, but everywhere the unseen enemy had followed and the evidence of the ghastly havoc wrought by the dread disease could be seen everywhere on the plains in the form of skeletons and dried-up bodies of the unfortunate victims.

The open country had proved deadly, so the old bull decided to make for the mountain forests; with him went the remnant of the once fine herd, the five survivors, and even this small number was reduced during the second day of the journey when a young bull, who for many days had been growing more and more thin, found himself unable to keep up with the others, and he lay down to die. The remaining four eventually reached their destination, a dense

forest on the upper part of a solitary mountain that rose abruptly two thousand feet above the yellow plains. Once there, they changed their former habits, and instead of feeding out in the open during the day they stayed among the bushes in the shelter of the great trees from sunrise to sunset, and then in the cool of the evening the little party sought their food on the open slopes of the mountain, which were covered with an abundance of long grass. Water was found in the several small streams that came from springs in the wooded gullies. There were also two or three pools for wallows, so in every way the new home proved satisfactory and Mbogo soon adapted himself to the changed conditions of life. Whether or not he missed his mother after a few weeks had passed it is difficult to say, but from what little one can learn of the inner thoughts of wild animals they seem to be endowed with that philosophy which makes the best of whatever happens and seldom mourns long for the dead. This seems true not only of the so-called lower animals, but also of most of the native tribes of Africa, who regard death without fear and the loss of even those nearest to them with what we might consider a strange equanimity and quick forgetfulness.

Mbogo accepted the inevitable according to the ways of his kind and very soon learned to rely on himself instead of the companionship and guidance of

his mother. Life in the forest-clothed mountain was entirely different from what he had been accustomed to on the plains, where he had lived in sunshine and heat of the day, and where even the nights had been warm except during and immediately after the rainy season. At first he found the intense cold of the nights most unpleasant, and he longed for the warmth of his former home. The mountain during the early hours, before the rising of the sun, was usually covered with clouds, and Mbogo disliked the damp mist, not only because it was so cold, but also because it prevented him seeing anything clearly more than a few yards away. Every morning when in the company of the three others he made his way from the open feeding-ground he had to walk through tall grass which bent over with the weight of the icy drops of water with which it was covered. He learned to walk behind his companions and so avoid the constant cold shower-bath. With the rising of the sun the clouds would gradually disperse and the grass would dry, but by this time the little herd would be ensconced for the day in the dense forest, where even during the noon heat it was cool and delightful. Here they were safe from the annoyance of flies and ticks, which had been so numerous and troublesome on the plains.

It was not long before the young buffalo became

accustomed to the cold and the mists; he even felt that the mists were something for which to be thankful, as they gave a feeling of security against the approach of enemies, especially man, who depends entirely on his eyesight. The currents of air in the forest were always shifting so that the scent of man could be detected even though he could not be seen. All things considered, the mountain seemed as safe as any place could be, and enemies were few and far between. Only rarely did men pass through the dark forests, and though lions made the deep gullies echo with their roars, the animals themselves kept usually to the lower slopes of the mountain, where the buffalo seldom ventured. The most dreaded of all their enemies, the rinderpest, had apparently been outwitted by the sagacity of the old bull, for no more deaths occurred and the little herd of four continued to thrive and grow fat in their new home. Of other animals there were but few who shared the forest and the grassy slopes of the mountain. Occasionally Mbogo came across a family of three rhino who were old residents of the place, but beyond these and a few bush buck, leopard and lion, there were none of the larger animals.

A year or two passed, during which, beyond the birth of a calf, no particular incident occurred to break the peaceful monotony of life. Mbogo was now

fully grown and carried a quite good-sized pair of horns. Peace and harmony had existed with few interruptions among the herd until one day when Mbogo and the old bull had an argument. The cause of this disagreement was, as might be surmised, one of the cows. The old bull objected very decidedly to his younger rival's behaviour, with the inevitable result that the hot-blooded youngster resented the interference and started a fight. Now when two buffalo fight the ground shakes, bushes are torn up by their roots and scattered, and the sound of the crashing of massive horns rings loud in the forest. The old bull had many fights to his credit, for by his victories had he secured the leadership of the herd for many years in partnership with the only other bull who had been able to stand more or less successfully against him. Mbogo had never indulged in a real fight, but what he lacked in experience he made up in the enthusiasm and agility that go with youth, while his adversary, though possessed of greater weight and far larger spread of horns, suffered from age. Foam-spattered and gasping for breath, the two powerful beasts fought the most primitive of all fights, the fight for a mate. Now the older bull would, by sheer weight, force his rival back and even drive him to his knees, but for a time the advantage lay with neither one; and then it became quite evident that

age was beginning to count against the grand old bull, and each time they separated and watched each other with nostrils open and eyes aflame, it was Mbogo who launched the next attack. Sometimes the old bull stood his ground firmly, sometimes he gave way a few yards as horns crashed against horns. Always it was head to head, and with all of Mbogo's superior agility he was unable to pass the other's guard and make a direct body stroke. Now and then the shoulders of one or other would receive the point of a horn and blood would tell the tale, but at no time was there any severe injury inflicted. Apparently the old bull realised that he could not win the battle; the best he could do was to surrender to youth. He had had his day, but now that day was passed. He no longer made any offensive moves, but stood when he could and moved back only when necessary while he let the other work off his energy by continued charges. Mbogo grew tired of this unsatisfactory method of fighting and finally gave it up. He had won the battle and would now be the leader of the little band of five. Had the herd been a large one, the old bull would probably have gone off to lead a solitary life; but with the existing conditions old rules no longer held good, and so it was that he remained with the small remnant of the once great herd.

With the exception of the birth of another calf, no

excitement occurred to disturb the family life of the buffalo for about another year. Then one morning, while the animals were sleeping in a dense part of the forest, Mbogo was on guard and he found it difficult to keep awake, for the chance of any enemy coming seemed very remote; yet, as leader, he was responsible for the safety of those under his care, and he must take no risk.

He was standing beneath a large tree from which a mass of twisting vines hung in fantastic snake-like confusion. Near by, among the bushes, lay the other buffalo, sleeping peacefully in the flickering sunlight and shadow. Suddenly the cracking of a twig broke the extreme stillness of the forest. Mbogo was awakened from his drowsy attitude and became instantly alert. With head raised and large fringed ears thrown forward he listened attentively. The sound might, of course, have been made by a rhino, in which case there would be no cause for alarm; but then again it might be made by men. Without moving his body he swung his head from side to side and with opened nostrils tested the air for the scent of whatever the visitor might prove to be. In the shelter of the great forest there was but little wind. What little there was came in scarcely perceptible eddies, and one of these brought with it the dreaded scent of human beings. Within a second or two

the rest of the herd had received the warning, and without making the slightest sound they all stood up and waited.

Very soon Mbogo caught sight of men, two white hunters and their native gun-bearers, coming cautiously along a buffalo path. He noted that if they kept on their way they must pass within a few yards of where he stood, and the question was, what should he do? To move away might attract the attention of the hunters; to stand still was equally risky, as it was scarcely possible that they would be passed unseen. To launch an attack might prove successful, but then it was somewhat dangerous.

Being the leader of a herd, even though it happened to be but a small one, was not so easy as it seemed, and he wondered what the old bull would do in his place. As though fascinated, Mbogo found himself reluctant to make any move. He would wait and see what developed. On came the men, picking their steps with care and keeping a sharp look-out in all directions. They were walking on a path which showed the prints of many hoofs, and buffalo might be encountered at any minute. It was therefore of the utmost importance that they should discover the animals before the animals saw them. Little did they realise that their every move was being observed. The cooing of a dove was the only sound and it seemed in strange

contrast to the tenseness which was so evident in the men and the beasts; and as the dove continued its soft call the men and the beasts came closer and closer together. Mbogo watched them; behind him, scarcely ten yards away, was the old bull, the deposed monarch, ready and even anxious to do battle on the slightest excuse. On either side of him were the two cows, filled with anxiety for their calves, who were close beside them. Without seeing the great black creatures who stood so still the men passed within a few yards, and having passed, they stopped, for they had reached a point where the trail divided and they did not know which fork to follow.

It is usually the smallest and apparently the most insignificant things which have the greatest influence on the lives of both men and animals, and the forked trail was the innocent cause of all that followed. Mbogo, seeing the hunters stop, thought he had been discovered. Had he remained in his place and made no move all would have gone well, but he was inexperienced in the ways of his enemies and he made up his mind to break away with all possible speed. With a terrific crash he started down hill, followed immediately by the others. Instantly the men caught sight of them, and as the old bull crossed the path he received a bullet in his side. He was old and bad tempered and hated men, especially those who carried

rifles; he determined, therefore, to have his revenge, and, swinging quickly, he charged furiously towards the group of men; before they realised what was happening one of the gun-bearers was struck by the maddened bull, whose long horn inflicted a terrible wound. The other native dashed behind a tree, while the two white men, scarcely knowing what to do, fired several shots at random into the great black body and then with remarkable speed they seized some convenient vines and climbed out of reach of the buffalo. Disgusted at finding that they were out of his reach, the old beast turned and made his way after the rest of the herd, who, under the leadership of Mbogo, had taken refuge in a part of the forest where the dense growth afforded good shelter. Here a council of war was held and in the end it was decided to go farther from the scene of the recent encounter. The place chosen for stopping was a spur of dense forest which ran out into a grassy space near the top of the mountain. Here they would be safe from surprise as no enemy could approach without being seen or smelt. The old bull, who had been badly but not fatally hit, was in an evil frame of mind. Now and then he would display his rage by tearing up bushes and tossing them in the air, as though to show what he would like to do to his enemies. He wished they would follow him and give him an opportunity for revenge, for he had blood in

his eye and longed to destroy those who without reason would have destroyed him.

The rest of the day passed without further incident, as the white hunters were busy taking care of the injured gun-bearer and consequently unable to follow the trail of the wounded buffalo. This did not, however, mean that they had given up hope of securing the magnificent pair of horns which had so nearly proved fatal to one or more of their party. But they must wait till the next day, when with trackers and another gun-bearer they would take up the trail. Buffalo were scarce animals in those days and a really good head was difficult to secure.

Mbogo with his herd waited until dark, and then, as nothing happened to cause further alarm, they followed out their ordinary routine of feeding and wallowing, and not until the rising sun began to pierce the morning mists did they take again to the shelter of the forest. The shadows were still long on the mountain slopes when the scent of man drifted to where the buffalo were resting. The old bull, made irritable by his wounds, was standing by himself some distance from the rest of the herd; he was the first to detect the warning of man's approach and he came quickly but quietly to the others and together they waited. After a time they caught sight of the hunters, who were following the fresh trail with great

care. The old bull immediately decided on a plan of action and with the others, going silently, they all moved ahead at a fast walk, then, after cantering about half a mile, he stopped and let the others go on; but instead of staying on the fresh tracks he circled round and eventually took up a position among some thick bushes from which he commanded a view of the trail. He had not waited long before the line of men in single file came in sight; keeping absolutely still, he allowed them to pass and then followed with the utmost caution perhaps fifty yards behind. He saw the trackers come to the place where he himself had turned off; they waited for a few minutes to discuss the situation and then one white man and two natives worked back on the single track. This was exactly what the wise old bull wished and he lost no time in cutting across to intercept the three, who before long came within sight. As soon as they had their backs to him he came forward with a rush, and before the wretched men realised what had happened he was among them, a raging, avenging fiend whose one idea was destruction, striking right and left with his wide-spreading sharply pointed horns. The white man fired a wild shot just as he was struck a terrific blow. Then the furious bull turned his attention to the natives, and he tossed one in the air as he made a drive at the other, who was trying to escape. As luck would have

it, the white hunter had fallen close to a fair-sized tree, and though terribly bruised and one leg seriously injured, he managed to scramble up the tree before the buffalo came at him again. Unfortunately for him his rifle had been shattered and he had only a revolver with him. The bull, seeing that his enemy had escaped, tried in vain to break down the tree by striking it terrific blows with his horn-covered head. The tree shook with the impact of each resounding blow, and the man had all he could do to retain his hold of the branches.

The sound of the shot had warned the rest of the men that something serious was happening and they hurried back to render assistance. The shot had also warned Mbogo and he too with the cows came back, and before they knew what was going on the men found themselves between two fires. In front was a frantic bull staring at them and giving forth blood-curdling snorts, and behind them another bull with the cows and calves.

The man in the tree, finding himself safe for the moment, drew his revolver and fired several shots into the bull, but though the distance was short, the soft bullets were scarcely able to penetrate the tough skin on the animal's back. All they did was to enrage still further the already half-mad beast, who, thinking the shots had come from the new arrivals, lost no time

in charging; but the men were too frightened to wait for his arrival, as Mbogo was coming from the other direction at the same time. Trees became remarkably popular, and no monkeys ever climbed more rapidly than the four men, but even so they only missed being caught by the narrowest possible margin. One unfortunate native in his haste had selected a slender tree which broke when Mbogo struck it, but in the confusion of falling branches the frightened man managed to make a dash for another tree and so reached safety.

The actual position then was as follows: one wounded white hunter in a tree with a practically useless revolver; one unwounded white hunter treed and having a rifle, but only two rounds of ammunition, as his belt had broken loose during the effort of climbing; three natives, also in trees. One had dropped the rifle he had been carrying and one had dropped his spear; the third one had retained his. Two other natives were either dead or very seriously injured. So much for the men. On the ground, which was a most unpopular place from the human point of view, there were two rifles undamaged and one broken one and two spears; and there were the buffalo—the wounded bull, Mbogo, two cows and two calves.

All things considered, the buffalo had the best of

it. The man who had the rifle with its two cartridges decided to try his luck; but a strong wind had come up and the swaying of the branches made accurate shooting difficult. The first shot struck the old bull, but not in a vital spot; the second one, however, did more serious injury and the old bull felt that his days were numbered. He threshed about in the fury of impotent rage, charged again and again at the various occupied trees, found one of the undamaged rifles and reduced it to a useless mass, tore up bushes, and eventually dropped dead at the foot of one of the trees—a gallant old warrior who died fighting.

Mbogo and the two cows scarcely knew what to do. They found that the trees were too sturdy to be knocked down, so they decided to keep the men who were in them prisoners. It was still scarcely noon, so there were six hours of daylight during which the treed men could try to discover some means of escape. Once darkness settled on the forest they would have to remain where they were. The natives were of opinion that the best solution of the problem was for one of them to try to make his escape unobserved and go down to a farm at the foot of the mountain and summon help. It would, of course, be a risky undertaking, but one was willing to take the chance. The question was, how could he reach the ground without the buffalo seeing him? Several times he

made the attempt, but each time with the same unsatisfactory result. The animals were too wide awake. But at last they were tricked by one of the white men and another of the natives attracting attention to themselves by pretending to come down. This gave the other native his opportunity, and in a few seconds he was on the ground creeping through the low brush like a snake.

By this time the sun had sunk behind the mountain and it would be but an hour before darkness covered the land, so all chance of being rescued while there was still daylight was gone, as even with the greatest speed it would be a good three hours before help could arrive; and in the darkness the odds would be so much in favour of the animals that it would be foolhardy to attempt anything in the way of help. The last things the imprisoned men saw as darkness clothed the forest were the shadowy black bodies of Mbogo and his cows growing dimmer and dimmer until they were lost to view. The sound of their bodies moving now and then among the bushes as they did their duties as sentries told only too clearly that they were still there and discouraged any attempts of the men to leave their uncomfortable perches.

The night passed with painful slowness. Cramped limbs ached with the bitter cold of the mountain air, for even near the equator the temperature is low at

an elevation of some seven or eight thousand feet. The white hunter (he had really become the hunted) who had been hit by the old bull endured torture throughout the long dreary hours, and his thoughts on the glorious sport of hunting African buffalo could scarcely have been expressed in polite society. Had Mbogo only been able to learn what these thoughts were, it would have consoled him for all that had happened and for the foodless night he was enduring.

But all things must come to an end, and the night slowly gave way to day; all the more slowly because the heavy mist with which the mountain was shrouded hid the light of the dawn sky.

With the rising of the sun a slight breeze came across the plains and, striking the mountain, came up the slopes, driving before it the misty clouds; but it did more than that, it brought the scent of many men. These men, who had started in the very early hours, had timed themselves to arrive as soon as possible after daylight. They knew that the wind would warn the buffalo, but no one made objection to that. The less buffalo the better was the general opinion, and every one of the party hoped sincerely that the dangerous and persistent animals would take the hint and move away. Mbogo decided that he had had quite enough of men to last him a long time, so without waiting to greet the new arrivals or say good-

bye to his prisoners, he and his little herd vanished so silently that none saw them go. Even when their disappearance was discovered no one moved, for they were too stiff, and so they waited for the help that was soon to arrive.

For some weeks after the events just related, Mbogo lived in a constant fear of fresh encounter with man. Never for a moment dared he relax his vigilance, for now he had the sole responsibility on his shoulders. The old bull was dead, and though he had imparted some of his wisdom, the younger bull realised that his own knowledge was far inferior to that of the ancient leader, who by his skill had saved the remnant of the once great herd by taking these few survivors up into the mountain, when, with luck and time, they would form the nucleus of another large company. The life of each one was of the utmost importance if this hope was to be realised, and he must see that no harm befell them. At present the little herd included Mbogo, two old cows, one young cow and one young bull. A good beginning if fortune favoured them.

A month or more passed before men again visited the mountain home of the buffalo. This time Mbogo was leading the others along a narrow path in the forest on his way to a well-hidden wallow, when, on coming round a sharp bend, he found himself face to face

with a party of hunters scarcely more than ten paces away. It is difficult to say which was the more surprised. Both stopped for a moment and stared with fear in their eyes. To charge or not to charge was the buffalo's thought. To shoot or not to shoot was the question in the hunters' minds. Mbogo was the first to come to a decision, and he, considering discretion to be the better part of valour, made a rapid turn into the tangle of the forest undergrowth and disappeared with his charges before the white hunters could fire a shot.

After this experience, Mbogo realised that he was the object of continual and most persistent hunting. Scarcely a day passed without the presence of man, and on several occasions he only saved himself by his extreme vigilance. Life became more and more difficult, and at last he came to the conclusion that the forest was no longer a place where buffalo could live in peace. A new home must be found, and so one night, instead of taking the herd to one of the grassy glades to feed, he started down the steep slope and continued until he found himself on the open plains. Keeping on in an easterly direction, he came eventually to a long papyrus swamp, and it seemed to him that this would be a desirable home. There was good grazing in the vicinity, while the swamp itself offered protection against the enemy—man. But the question

of whether it was safe from that still greater and more deadly enemy, disease, could not be discovered except by experience, and experience might prove costly or even fatal, for the remembrance of what had driven the herd, or rather what was left of it, from the plains was still fresh enough to cause uneasiness.

As it was nearly dawn when the swamp had been discovered, there was no time to go farther, so the next hours were devoted to feeding and then soon after sunrise the little party disappeared into the dense tangle of papyrus. They had scarcely settled themselves down to sleep when a flock of little white egrets, flying low, discovered the buffalo and immediately came to pay them a visit. Mbogo had never known any birds except the small tick birds, and at first he resented the familiarity of the snow-white visitors when they perched on his back and walked about as though his body was their natural promenade. Seeing that they did no harm, he finally gave up trying to dislodge them by swinging his tail across his back or throwing his horns against his shoulders.

While the buffalo were sleeping they were disturbed several times during the day by the birds suddenly flying up and circling round for some minutes and then returning and perching on the animals' backs. Whenever this occurred Mbogo noticed that the air was tainted by the scent of man. This was rather

disturbing, and at last he came out to the edge of the papyrus to investigate. He found that some natives were driving herds of cattle, and as they were a long way off he decided that there was no cause for alarm, so he returned to the seclusion of the swamp and spent the rest of the day quietly sleeping and keeping watch.

After the sun had set he led the herd out to feed on the grass-covered plains. There were but few other animals in the vicinity: a small herd of zebra, some hartebeest and wildebeest. The plains were not as he remembered them years ago, for then there were vast numbers of animals of many sorts. Perhaps the dread disease which caused such havoc among the buffalo had also taken heavy toll of the other creatures, and he wondered whether after all he had been wise to leave the mountain where at least they were safe from the rinderpest to run the risk of the danger that was even greater than man. He would wait and see what happened; in the meantime he and his charges enjoyed the sweet dry grass which the wild animals seem to prefer to the rich, succulent green grass that is found near water and after the rains.

Africa is a land of danger, a land where no creature may feel secure. Enemies exist in forms so varied that even with the greatest vigilance death comes at most unexpected moments, and from unexpected

quarters. In avoiding one source of danger another may be encountered, and we cannot help wondering how any animal survives in the constant fight against enemies, seen and unseen. Mbogo and his little herd, feeding in apparent safety by the light of the full clear moon, were entirely unconcious of the stealthy approach of an enemy; but in the tall yellow grass a full-grown lion was making his way with care. It was a very long time since he had tasted buffalo meat and he decided to indulge in a feast this night. He had eaten zebra and antelope so often that a change of diet would be welcome. The killing of one of these great black beasts would of course be no easy task, and if he made a mistake in the attack he himself might be killed. So, all things considered, he must use every care. He examined each of the buffalo to see which would prove the easiest and most desirable. The big bull, Mbogo, was out of the question; his horns were long and his neck so massive that it would be difficult to break. The smallest calf would be the easiest to kill, but then there was the mother to consider, as she would without doubt attack, probably with unpleasant results. It became a choice between one of the cows and the nearly full-grown bull; whichever drifted clear of the others would be the one to attack. For a long time the little herd kept close together, then at last one of the cows wandered apart,





THEY CAME TO A WONDERFUL RIVER WHICH WAS BORDERED

and the lion, who had been careful to keep down-wind, crept forward until within perhaps fifteen yards, when he stopped, crouched low and waited until the unsuspecting buffalo had her back turned in his direction. Then he made a rush, with lightning speed seized his victim by the nose and drawing her head down with his great power broke her neck. It had all happened so quickly that it was over before the rest of the herd realised what had occurred. The lion, knowing that there was danger of a concerted attack being made, took up a defensive position, but the buffalo were too much concerned about their own safety to risk an encounter, and after a few moments turned and fled, with Mbogo in the lead.

This was the beginning of a long trek which lasted a year or more. The general direction taken was to the north-east, and in the course of their leisurely journey they crossed many rivers and went through all sorts of country: open rolling plains, swamp lands, thorn-tree districts, scrub-covered hills and dense forests; and then at last they came to a wonderful river which was bordered by a broad belt of shade-giving trees outside of which were hills and *dongas* where there was unlimited grazing and plenty of cover in case of enemies. Apparently there were no human beings in the neighbourhood and no lions, so Mbogo decided to make this the new home.

They had not been in the place for long before they came across some more of their kind, another small herd of seven cows, two calves and two young bulls, survivors of a once large herd which had been nearly destroyed by the rinderpest. By general consent the two lots joined forces and lived together with Mbogo as the leader. For a year or two all went well with the combined herd, into which in the meantime four more calves had been born, when one day, while they were sleeping beneath some large trees, they were disturbed by the scent of man. Without waiting to see who their enemies were Mbogo gave the signal to move, and in silence they made their way to a deep *donga* some miles to the north of the river.

Unfortunately for them, the peace which they had enjoyed for so long was destined to be broken, for the men, whose scent had awakened their fears, were a party of natives out on a hunting expedition for the express purpose of getting buffalo hides for shields. These men had unlimited patience and were skilled and fearless hunters. Several times, thanks to Mbogo's untiring watchfulness, the herd had escaped from their enemies, but one evening when he was leading them out from a dense thicket towards a feeding-ground he passed a place where a number of the natives were concealed. The first intimation he had

of their presence was the whistling sound of a poison-tipped arrow, followed quickly by several more in quick succession, and immediately the whole herd stampeded in the direction of the hills. For a mile or two they went before stopping, and then as there was no sign of pursuit they rested, and Mbogo saw that there were no absentees. But his satisfaction at finding the herd intact was short-lived. One of the bulls and two cows showed signs of distress, and when the signal to move forward again was given these three followed with evident reluctance. After going a few yards one stopped and then lay down. Soon the other two followed the example, and when Mbogo tried to urge them forward they made futile efforts to move. The deadly poison with which the arrows had been coated was doing its work silently but so very surely. Mbogo knew that death had come to these three; how, he could not tell, but in some way it was connected with the scent of natives, and he determined to leave the district before further mishaps befell them, and so once more he had to search for a new home. This time he determined to go as far away as possible from the haunts of man, both black and white, and he headed northward directly away from the river. Under the kindly protection of darkness the herd started off into the unknown, and for many hours no halt was made; but at last, shortly

before dawn, they came to a small spring of clear water which came from a rugged, rock-strewn mountain. Many trails led to this water, which was evidently a favourite drinking - place for the animals of the district, and Mbogo and his companions stopped to quench their thirst, for they had had nothing to drink since the previous morning. Having satisfied themselves, they wandered about in search of food, and continued to eat until long after the sun had risen. Being out in the open during the daytime was entirely against the habits of the buffalo, so the feeding hours were cut short and the rest of the day was spent under the shade of a grove of large flat-topped thorn trees, which was the only cover in the immediate neighbourhood.

For several nights after this the herd continued on their way. Food had been fairly abundant, but water was so scarce that once they had been forced to go without any for over twenty-four hours. As the country was intensely hot, this proved a severe hardship. Flies, too, caused serious annoyance, and Mbogo began to wonder whether he had not made a mistake in coming to this part of the country, the more so as most of the animals were suffering from some unknown illness.

At last the rough, rocky mountains gave place to rolling country where trees were abundant and the grazing

was good. Other animals, too, became more plentiful, zebra of two sorts, oryx and other antelope and many giraffe. Rhino also were fairly numerous. This was a good sign, for it showed that there must be an abundance of water. The buffalo reached this country early one morning, and by following a well-beaten trail soon came to a river-bed in which were several small deep pools. The water proved to be bitter, and at first the animals, thirsty though they were, could scarcely bring themselves to drink the strange-tasting fluid. But they did not realise that this water was their salvation. They were all more or less ill owing to their having swallowed a large number of leeches when drinking at one of the springs. These leeches had grown inside them and were the cause of their illness. The saline or soda water had the effect of destroying these blood-sucking worms, and within the next day or two the buffalo had recovered their customary health, and in doing so they learned a lesson which would be of value to them throughout life.<sup>1</sup>

The life of Mbogo and his herd during the several

<sup>1</sup> These so-called soda springs are found in many parts of East Africa; some of them are as clear as crystal, with a beautiful green colour; but these as a rule are so strongly medicinal that animals are apt to avoid them except under certain conditions. Others vary greatly in the amount of chemical they contain, and in certain places this impregnated water is preferred by the wild animals to the purer rain water. The effect of the soda springs upon leeches in buffalo I have actually seen in the country north of the Guaso Nyiro.

years they remained in the district of the soda springs was, in a general way, peaceful and lacking in excitement. Seldom did man invade the territory, and then they passed through without stopping more than a day or two at the waterholes. On these occasions they usually did some shooting, but only the oryx and other antelope suffered. The buffalo took no chances. Mbogo had learned his lesson regarding men so thoroughly that whenever it was possible he avoided them, and when men put in an appearance, he led the herd away to some small pools in the river-bed, if it happened during the dry season when water was scarce; otherwise he simply moved up into a range of hills a few miles away, where, owing to the rough, rocky nature of the slopes and valleys, there was little danger of being followed. Water was to be found among the rocks in sufficient quantity to satisfy their needs, and by watching the baboons, who must have water at frequent intervals, these well-hidden pools were easily found.

The herd increased in numbers with astonishing rapidity, and the little band of five wanderers, which had started out from the forest-covered mountain after the old bull had been killed, could now muster about thirty head. There had been only one death since the three were killed by poison arrows near the big river.





Mbogo was the proud leader of this growing herd; he had grown to be a powerful beast, with magnificent horns whose polished tips shone like burnished black steel. The wrinkles on his face grew more numerous and deeper with age, and his almost hairless body, with its deep folds on the massive neck and behind the shoulders, attained an astonishing size and weight. With increasing age his temper did not improve. He became irritable and more and more ready to fight the younger bulls, who might occasionally presume to dispute his leadership, to their own discomfiture. One of these ambitious youngsters, who on more than one occasion defied Mbogo, finally aroused the old leader to such a pitch of anger that a fierce battle followed which lasted for over an hour and resulted in the death of the would-be usurper. This lesson had a salutary effect on the others, and for a long time peace reigned in the herd with the old king supreme. With the passing of the years the habits of the buffalo gradually changed. The memory of the dreaded rinderpest became remote, for there were but few survivors of those days of death and misery. The disease had then driven them to seek the protection of the forest shade during the daytime, and they had only dared to venture out in the open feeding-places between sunset and sunrise. But now conditions were different; no longer was the unseen enemy lurking

about ready to strike those who, disregarding the new rule of feeding only at night, ventured into the open sunlit plains. And so the old order of things slowly returned. Slowly, because animals seldom make any rapid change in their habits except under very exceptional conditions. Instead of leading the herd into the shaded seclusion of bush and tree with the rising of the sun, Mbogo kept them out later and later until the greater part of the day was spent in the open. Wallows situated in exposed places were visited during the noon hours, when the animals would enjoy themselves by spending as much time as they wished in the muddy water which cooled their skin and discouraged the attentions of the various *doo-doo*s (as insects are called out there) which annoy man and beast so persistently in the wilds of most parts of tropical Africa.

The herd continued to grow in numbers until they presented much the same appearance as in the days before the disease, and their great black bodies were once more to be seen on the sunlit plains. Mbogo was the patriarch of this fine herd, and he might well have been proud of the results brought about by his leadership. But he was growing old and age is not respected in the animal world. Those who would rule and be masters of herds must be in the prime of life. Neither the aged nor the infirm are tolerated,

for the well-being of the future generation depends on good, sturdy parentage; weaklings are a danger to a herd and are seldom allowed to survive. Such is the inexorable law of the wilds which puts a premium on vigour and penalises weakness. Mbogo was challenged by more than one mature bull, and each time the fight resulted in defeat of the leader to whom they owed their very existence. His position in the herd was usurped, his pride humbled, though his spirit was still unbroken. He finally left his herd and went off by himself to live a life of solitude, when he must be his own sentry and sleep with his senses always more or less alert. It was a restless, nerve-racking existence which affected his temper. He viewed the world from an angle of distrust and even hate. Its pleasures had become a thing of the past. Yet he must live his allotted term, whatever that might be, and then, perhaps, slink off into the seclusion of the forest to die alone and unheeded after the manner of his kind. But it happened that man interfered with nature's course, and a white hunter chanced one day to see the great creature, grey and wrinkled with age, whose horns, though battered and scarred, were of unusual size; and a bullet, perhaps mercifully (who shall say?), ended the long life of Mbogo, the Buffalo.



# KIFARU, THE RHINOCEROS



## KIFARU, THE RHINOCEROS

UNDER the thin shade of a wide-spreading, flat-topped thorn tree a large rhino lay asleep, for the sun was high and the heat intense. The daily breeze blew across the parched grass of the rolling plains and it carried the invisible information that there were men in the vicinity. This unwelcome scent disturbed the sleeping rhino, for though an animal's body sleeps the nose and ears are always alert. Kifaru, as we shall call the rhino, raised her head, sniffed the air, twitched her ragged ears and considered things in general and the fearsome scent in particular. Then she pushed her front legs forward and with a great heave lifted her body and assumed a standing position.

She was a mighty beast whose age was unknown, and she was ugly; not even her best friend could have found anything beautiful in her long, queer, wrinkled face, her small pig-like eyes, her high forehead and torn ears, and nature, as though anxious to make her more completely absurd, had planted two long, thick, pointed horns lengthways along her face. One, the longer, protruded forward above the pointed nose;

it was perhaps thirty inches or more in length. The second, which was thicker and not quite so long, rose straight and was placed between the forehead and the front horn slightly forward of the eyes, and neither of these horns was attached to the skull according to the customary habits of animal's horns. They grew like strange excrescences out of the skin and were composed of a mass of closely compressed hair which formed a horn-like substance that was hard and highly polished towards the points.

Kifaru's body weighed about two tons and at the highest point of the shoulder stood over five feet six inches from the ground. Unlike her Indian cousin, who, by the way, is an inferior beast, having but one horn, she wore a fairly well-fitting skin. There were a few conspicuous wrinkles, it is true; on the neck and over the front legs were the worst ones, but then when a skin is nearly an inch thick it is no easy matter to make it fit snugly. The Indian rhino is an example of how badly a skin can fit. Kifaru was a well-built creature, even though fortune had dealt unkindly with her face, and as she stood beneath the thorn tree she gave the impression of great strength. She also gave the impression of having a bad temper, which was not to be wondered at. To be disturbed out of a sound sleep never improves tempers, even though they may be habitually good, and hers was not.

She stood for a long time sniffing the air, but having very poor eyesight she could not discover the actual presence of any enemy. Leaving the shade of the tree she moved forward in an up-wind direction, and as she walked the scent became more and more distinct and annoying. Being irritable by nature, she decided to hurry things up. Walking was too slow, so she trotted, always towards the increasingly strong scent. As she trotted she raised her short tufted tail—her danger signal, which meant that she was quite willing to meet trouble half-way, or in fact that she would have no objection to going the whole way to meet it.

Instead of keeping in a straight line she zigzagged in a curious manner, perhaps with the idea of covering more ground in the search for the disturbers of her sleep. Suddenly, in coming over the brow of a low hill, she discovered a long line of moving objects only a short distance away; scent, sight and hearing all went to prove that these slow-moving creatures were men, who, on seeing the great beast appear as though from nowhere, changed with lightning speed from slow to very rapid movement.

The line of porters, for that is what they were, flung their loads down in every direction with a happy disregard for their contents and immediately scattered themselves over the near-by landscape. Trees were

scarce and small, but within an incredibly short time every available one was occupied by the half-naked men who crowded the branches to a point that was positively dangerous. Many of the frightened negroes, unable to secure a foothold on the trees, rushed about as though pursued by a swarm of African wasps, and there are few things that produce greater consternation. Next to trees the most popular refuges were large ant-hills, which were fairly numerous and afforded good shelter so long as they were not hit too hard, and it happened that Kifaru, after taking in the situation, decided to stir up as much trouble as conditions would allow, and, moving about from side to side, with tail erect and snorting defiance to all and sundry, she trotted rapidly first towards one of the frightened men and then to another, and at last concentrated on a large ant-hill full eight feet in height on which three men were crowded. She took one good look at the wretched fellows and without more ado charged. Now an ant-hill may be very solidly made, or it may be largely honeycombed with passages, and this one by evil chance was of the latter variety. The consequence was that when the two tons of rhino struck at high velocity the mound of dry sandy earth crumbled as though hit by a shell, and the three men had scarcely time to jump clear. Two of them fell and for a few moments nothing could be seen but a dense cloud

of reddish dust, out of which eventually emerged a snorting red rhino and two equally red men, who tried their best to beat the world's record for the two hundred yards run. The third man, having jumped clear, went off in the opposite direction with a start of several seconds.

Kifarú, half blinded by the dust, scarcely knew what to do. The scent and sound of human beings came from every quarter, but for a time she could see nothing; but still that did not prevent her rushing about first one way and then another in the hope of finding something on which to vent her temper. The first object to be encountered was one of the discarded loads, which happened to be a box containing whisky. This was promptly impaled on her front horn and tossed in the air, needless to say with highly disastrous results to the whisky, which sprinkled itself all over the dusty rhino and, streaming down, caused the red dust to form a strange assortment of stripes. A couple of other loads were found and tossed, both of which contained *posho* (maize meal, which is the porters' food), and this made a white cloud which deposited itself unevenly on the old beast and added greatly to the general effect and produced a most peculiar colour-scheme. A rhino's colour is normally dark grey, but Kifarú came out of the fray a tri-coloured animal painted red, white and grey, much

to the amusement of the porters, whose roars of laughter were heard in every direction.

The bewildered animal came to the conclusion that there were too many men and far too much strange dust and queer-smelling liquid, and that the sooner she got away the better, so, after rushing about in an aimless sort of way for several minutes, she made off at a rapid gallop, slowing down after a time to a trot which was continued for nearly half an hour. By this time she was far away from the interrupted *safari*. Incidentally it may be remarked that the white leaders of the porters had foolishly gone on ahead to find a suitable camping-ground and had seen the whole affair from a hill some distance away. Their remarks upon the subject of whisky and rhino must be left to the reader's imagination.

Kifaru, having covered several miles across country, felt that she was safe from any chance of pursuit. She was hot after her run, and finding a large tree she sought its welcome shade, and after standing for some time to make sure that no enemy was in the vicinity, she lay down and finished her interrupted sleep.

Late in the afternoon, when the sun was sinking behind the western hills, she awoke and decided that her toilet needed serious attention. There was a water-hole not far away where she could have a "wash and brush up", so she walked slowly towards it, stopping





ON ARRIVING AT THE POOL SHE FOUND THAT IT WAS ALREADY OCCUPIED

now and then to eat the small plants that formed her favourite food. On arriving at the pool she found that it was already occupied by another of her kind; however, there was room for them both and she entered the muddy water and lay down in it. There she remained for nearly an hour soaking off the various coloured dusts with which her body had been covered. In the meantime her bathing companion, having washed to his satisfaction, moved away without paying any attention to Kifaru, who at the end of the time came out thoroughly refreshed, and having rolled in the dust until quite dry, got up, shook herself and considered her toilet completed to her liking.

She was some little distance from her regular home, and rhino are usually inclined to stay in an area of a few square miles for weeks at a time, unless disturbed, in which case they may travel a long distance before taking up a new abode. They are curiously regular in their habits, a fact that is known to those who would hunt them and is one of the reasons that they are vanishing so rapidly.

When Kifaru left the bathing-pool the light of day had almost gone, and the country was hiding itself in the quickly fading twilight. She did not go directly back to her own district, for some reason difficult to discover; perhaps her mind was uneasy as to the whereabouts of the *safari* party and she

considered it the part of wisdom to make a large circle on the chance of finding out where they were, or perhaps it was that a certain spring of unusually good water attracted her; but whatever the reason she walked slowly along, feeding as she went and always keeping more or less towards the gentle breeze, which like a soft, cool breath drifted over the plains, carrying the sweet scent of the thorn tree, whose pale yellow flowers were now in full bloom.

Kifaru passed many other animals in the course of her walk, chiefly antelope of several kinds and the ubiquitous zebra, but none of them paid any attention to the big creature, who in turn showed no interest in them, for the rhino is a solitary and exclusive beast who mixes only with his own kind, and even with them he can scarcely be considered gregarious. More often than not he lives his life alone or with one or two others and only rarely are they seen in parties of four or five. About an hour or so after Kifaru had left the waterhole the moon rose and in the soft, cold light the rhino's great body, covered with the grey dust in which she had rolled, looked ghostly white. Her progress was slow, as she fed as she walked, and it was several hours before she came to the neighbourhood of the spring. When a slight change in the direction of the breeze brought the scent of man, feeding operations ceased immediately, and all the humiliations of

the day came to her slow-working mind. Perhaps these were the very people who had laughed at her when she had changed her colour; if so, this would be a good opportunity to teach them a lesson. With head raised she came forward at a fast walk, stopping now and then to investigate, for the scent of man was mixed with the smell of fire. One was as bad as the other and for a time she hesitated, as though not sure that the plan of revenge was wise.

A closer examination was necessary before making up her mind, so she approached somewhat carefully until at last, not far from the spring, she saw the glow of fires reflected on the trees. A little closer and she could distinguish two pale green tents and several small white ones, and near the fire a man sat, apparently fast asleep.

Kifaru came still closer, without making a sound. It was a wonderful opportunity to create a really good disturbance, and for a long time she stood still trying to make up her mind what to charge. One of the larger tents, which was a little to the side of the fires, looked like a good target, so finally she determined to launch the attack. As a preliminary, a couple of petulant snorts seemed quite in order; coming as they did out of the perfect stillness of the night they produced a most gratifying effect. It was as though a bomb had exploded in the midst of the sleeping camp.

The *askari* who was supposed to be on watch very nearly tumbled into the fire, and in his struggle to recover himself loosed off his old army rifle (they usually refuse to shoot, which accounts for the small percentage of accidents in *safaris*!), which, fortunately, only tore some bark off the trunk of a near-by tree. Those who had not been aroused by the snort responded to this deafening noise, and everyone turned out of their various sleeping quarters with remarkable speed. This, according to Kifaru's idea, was the psychological moment for action, so, after one more frightening snort, she rushed full speed past the bewildered men straight at the tent, and just as the white hunter came out of the open flap she charged completely through the canvas side, which ripped through as though it were paper, across the mosquito-netted bed and out the other side. A most thoroughly satisfactory smash-up; she even thought of turning her attention to the second large tent, but decided against it as a shot whizzed past unpleasantly close to her head; so she promptly turned and trotted off into the darkness with a smile on her ugly face at the thought of the consternation she had wrought in the peaceful, slumbering camp.

Of course she did not realise that such acts are highly foolish, as they give people the impression that rhino are dangerous, consequently the wretched beasts

are shot on the slightest provocation, and all because their sense of humour is developed along lines which do not appeal to mankind. It may be very funny to break up a line of heavily laden porters or charge through a tent, but the fun is all, or at least chiefly, on the rhino's side, and has resulted in man's dislike for him and his foolish habits. Certainly no other animal is so foolish as to hunt for trouble when it could be so easily avoided.

Kifaru had failed to get the drink of cool spring water, but she had had her revenge, and now that she knew where the camp was situated she would return, free from the fear of man, to her own particular district, where there were waterholes, plenty of food and enough shade trees, so that she could always find one for her noonday rest. The waterholes were in the bed of an otherwise dry river, and were, unfortunately, visited by so many animals that the water was nearly always more or less muddy. However, when she craved a good clean drink there was always the spring which was not more than four or five miles away.

About a week after the experiences with the *safari* and the camp, Kifaru gave birth to a baby, and a fine baby he was, weighing several hundred pounds and looking much like his mother, except for the horns, which were merely slightly raised bumps. He was a lazy little fellow and spent most of the time asleep,

after the manner of babies; and like other babies he considered food to be a most important feature of life. For this reason his sleep was interrupted with great frequency in order that he might satisfy his perpetual hunger. The moment he had partaken of nourishment he would lie down almost immediately. Only when his mother visited the waterholes did he indulge in any real exercise, as of course he would not be left alone. Indeed, he was seldom more than forty or fifty yards from her, and that was when she was searching for food. She was particular what she ate, seldom touching grass unless driven to it by the lack of the small and inconspicuous plant whose leaves furnished her with the food she wanted. It seems curious that so large an animal can extract enough substance from such small plants to nourish their enormous bodies. Evidently they do not expend much nervous energy in the ordinary course of their lives, otherwise they would have to devote far more time to feeding, for actually it would seem that they sleep about as many hours as they feed, perhaps even more, and yet they always appear to be thoroughly nourished.

Kifaru watched over her youngster with the same solicitude for their offspring that is displayed by most wild animals. When alone she had kept an indifferent look-out, but now she was constantly alert, and at the slightest sound or suspicious scent she would become

very much excited and search in every direction to find its origin. One day she happened to be lying in some fairly high grass with her youngster close by her side, when she noticed the scent of man. Instantly she was on her feet. Instead of going away from the source of this smell, that is to say, in a down-wind direction, she trotted out of the grass into the more open country towards where the danger must be. She had not gone far, accompanied as usual by the little fellow, when she saw a figure moving. A rhino's eyesight is not good, and anything over fifty yards must appear to him as a blur; movement, of course, attracts attention, especially if the figure is against the skyline, and this figure, which was dark, showed clearly against a background of short yellow sunlit grass. Without waiting for any further provocation than the odour of man, Kifaru rushed towards the figure; whether with the idea of doing damage or simply to investigate it would be hard to say, but having her young one with her the chances are she meant mischief. Anyhow, whatever the motive, she trotted rapidly forward, and on getting within two or three yards, without change of speed she lowered her head, so that the front horn was almost parallel with the ground, and thought to strike the man. He, as chance would have it, was of the Massai, a tribe that is not addicted to fear; neither do they go in for

hunting wild beasts except on certain occasions, as they seldom eat the meat of any but domestic animals. This man was armed with a long sharp spear, a long sword-like knife and a cleverly painted buffalo-skin shield, but none of these did he use. He simply stood his ground, and as the rhino came to within a few feet he jumped very quickly to one side, and as she passed he gave the old beast a dig in the flank with his spear just to teach her manners. Instead of turning, as one might have expected her to do, she kept on as she was going, except that after feeling the spear-point she changed from a fast trot to a gallop, and the youngster had all he could do to keep up with her. On they went against the wind for a mile or so, and then stopped, and after looking about in every direction to see that all was safe, Kifaru began feeding. The young one also got a meal from his mother and then, tired by the long run, settled himself down beneath a small bush and was soon fast asleep.

With the coming of the rainy season the two rhino left the flat country, which was very wet; the prevalence of the black cotton soil made walking difficult, for this curious earth, which is so light and friable when dry, develops into a sort of morass which gives no foothold and is soft and slippery as soon as the rains begin. It is even worse when it begins to dry between spells of rain, as it then sticks to the feet and walking

becomes almost impossibly difficult. On this account Kifaru led the way to a range of hills some thirty miles distant. These hills were rough and rocky, with shaded valleys where good food was to be found and there was shelter from the cool winds which blow during the wet season. Throughout the five or six weeks of the rains the weather is a succession of sunshine and showers and this is followed, in the higher altitudes of East Africa, that is to say over four thousand feet, by a cloudy, cold period which lasts a month or more. The country then is wonderfully green and flowers are in full bloom. After this the sun once more takes possession of the land, and in a short time all vegetable life matures and before long the plains become once more a golden colour as the grasses dry. Animals become fat, for there is food everywhere and waterholes are abundant, so that long treks are unnecessary.

Kifaru left the hills and returned to the open plains once more soon after the rains. But the peaceful life she expected to find was doomed to be destroyed by hunting parties. Scarcely had she made up her mind to settle in a stretch of country which proved very much to her liking than a large party of white men and porters appeared. Twice she narrowly missed trouble when men stalked her. They were men who knew what they were about, and they came

up-wind; each time it was the youngster who saw the hunters approaching; by this time he had grown to be quite a good size, but being still young his eyesight was better than his parent's and he gave the alarm and saved the situation. Another time when they were both asleep under a thorn tree they were saved by the tick birds.<sup>1</sup> Whether it was the actual noise made by the birds or whether at that moment they scented human beings it is difficult to say. Whatever the cause, the two rhino became instantly alert, and, rising, they moved away from the shelter of the tree just as a shot rang out. Kifaru felt a sharp pain in her shoulder as a bullet glanced off the hard skin,

<sup>1</sup> These birds are the friends of the rhino; they live most of the time on the backs of the animals and eat the various insects which are harboured in the rough skin. To a certain extent they also act as sentries, though not nearly so much as people generally imagine. Still at times they will fly up when men are seen in the vicinity and make a harsh call, which is frequently spoken of as the warning note. Having done this, they will as often as not return to the animals and continue their industrious search for insects. How much this proves it is very difficult to say. It is indeed doubtful whether it proves anything, as this habit of flying up suddenly is not confined to such times as the approach of human beings. It seems to take place periodically when there is no apparent reason for alarm, and the rhino on these occasions pays no attention to their movements. Many a time I have watched rhino from a place of hiding some distance away and with field-glasses have seen the birds come and go when there was no reason for the disturbance. Starlings will behave in exactly the same way with sheep and cattle, and yet no one suggests that they are doing sentry duty. A rhino will sometimes have his special tick-birds on his back while he is actually charging. It is therefore more reasonable to suppose that when the birds fly up as man is stalking a rhino, it is only a coincidence, and not a deliberate warning on the part of the birds. Our imaginative minds run wild with very little provocation, and we like to find motives for the behaviour of beasts and birds that appeal to our fancy, and a theory once advanced is quickly spread and very difficult to discredit.—AUTHOR.

and without waiting to investigate the cause she trotted away with her youngster and so escaped disaster.

Scarcely a week passed before she was disturbed again by the scent of man and this decided her to leave the locality, which was proving altogether too dangerous for her liking. Without having any definite idea of where she was going she headed in a north-westerly direction. For several days, or rather nights, for she generally rested during the greater part of the day, she made her way over more or less open country; water was somewhat scarce and of poor quality, but at last she came to a large lake and thought that the water problem was solved. A closer examination revealed the sad fact that the water was so strongly saline that it was undrinkable and was not even fit for bathing. This was disappointing, as the country near the lake was otherwise most satisfactory. The only waterhole in the neighbourhood was occupied by natives and their cattle, so Kifaru determined to continue until better conditions were found. Instead of improving, the country became more and more unsuitable; food was scarce and there was no water, so that both the mother and her young one suffered. When daylight came after a hard and unsatisfactory night's search, Kifaru considered it wiser to keep on for several hours in the hope of finding more desirable country, and towards noon she came to a broad marsh through

which ran a river of clear, cool water shaded by bushes and tall fever trees (the tall acacia trees usually found near water) whose bright lemon-coloured trunks stood out with such startling clearness against the dark background. Here at least was water, but food such as the rhino needed was scarce. Still, for the rest of the day she would stay here, for the place was more than welcome after the intense heat of the morning's walk across the sun-scorched, arid plains. Towards evening the journey to a land of peace and plenty was renewed.

Kifaru thought that by following the river towards its source she would be likely to reach suitable country, but the stream suddenly left the flat land when a waterfall, some hundred feet or more in height, fell from the mountain-side. The plains were bordered by a great escarpment which seemed to tower almost to the clouds. Kifaru, with her defective eyesight, could not see this; all she saw was a steep slope which rose like a wall and was covered with a dense growth of large trees. After looking about she found an old trail, made apparently by rhino or buffalo, which led in a zigzag way up the side of the mountain, and she and her youngster started the long climb which eventually brought them to a tableland some thousands of feet above the plains. It had been a wonderful journey, chiefly through forests, dark and damp,

where the sun was shut out almost completely by the dense foliage. Here and there were open stretches of grass and low bush and countless flowers, and in these places the two rhino spent many days enjoying the peace and the abundant food. The nights were cold but otherwise the country was perfect. Trails were found through the forest, but no other animals were encountered save a few wild pigs and an occasional bushbuck. But on the open plateau were antelope of several kinds, eland, hartebeest and Grant's gazelle, and also some rhino. Kifaru paid them a visit but received little encouragement to join their party, so she moved on across the undulating high plain which was surrounded by high cloud-enveloped mountain peaks.

The spirit of adventure had come to Kifaru and she thought that she would see what lay beyond this cold wind-swept district. After going for a few miles the trail she was following led to the edge of a steep decline, at the bottom of which was an immense circular flat area entirely surrounded by a steep wall over a thousand feet high. Kifaru could not see this, but she felt the warmer air blow across the low plains and up the side where she stood, and also she smelt the odour of many animals, and so she continued along the trail which wound its way down the steep slope until at last she came to the bottom of the great

crater. For it was an old crater, relic of the days when all this region was a turmoil of raging volcanoes which tore up the country and by fire and molten lava laid waste to many hundreds of square miles. To-day this district is quiet, and except for a few still smouldering volcanic peaks there is nothing but the formation of the mountains and the occasional craters to show what the past had been; and the rhino, with his strange prehistoric appearance, seems to have belonged to the period of long ago, when nature was so unrestful and curious forms of life existed.

Kifaru, as she walked about on the smooth and nearly level floor of the crater, thought that at last she had discovered the sort of home she had hoped to find. Everywhere food was lavishly abundant and streams were numerous, also swamps and waterholes. A lake of considerable size covered one end of the crater, but the water was somewhat salty. Countless thousands of wildebeest and zebra roamed over this strange place, also hartebeest, impala, Grant's gazelle in lesser numbers and here and there a group of stately ostrich. It was a land more wonderful than Kifaru had ever known, and so far there was no taint of man to mar the prevailing peace. Here life would be easy and happy and the young rhino could grow up in safety.

It was late afternoon when Kifaru had entered this

paradise, so she had not time to do much investigating before darkness settled on the country; with the darkness the temperature fell rapidly, until by early morning, when the crater was hidden by mist it became so cold that Kifaru wondered whether after all the place was as perfect as she had first believed it to be. But the sun, when it rose above the surrounding mountains, soon drove the mist away and bathed the land with its welcome warmth. The cold was quickly forgotten and once more it became a paradise of the wild. Kifaru fed till she could eat no more, and her youngster, though still dependent on his mother for most of his nourishment, nibbled at the tempting clover<sup>1</sup> and other plants that grew in such endless profusion; and then they wandered about and explored their new home. They noted that on one side of the lake there was a large grove of tall thorn trees which offered shade for the noon sleep. Through this grove a small stream of clear, cool water wound its way; it was bordered by high reeds, so that they could bathe here in perfect seclusion, for even if men should chance to visit this remote place they would never venture into this tangled swamp. In every direction near the lake broad hippo paths cut through the grass. How these short-legged creatures ever

<sup>1</sup> Clover is one of the strange features of this wonderful crater, though how it got there is a mystery which I do not think has yet been solved.—AUTHOR.

found their way over the mountains to this remote lake it is difficult to say. On the southern side of the lake the country was more or less open, grass-covered and in parts rocky with patches of forest and many scattered trees and bushes, among which were baboons in their hundreds. Here they fed, fought, and played and made hideous noises after the manner of their kind. In the lake and on its shores thousands of birds added to the beauty of the scene—egrets, herons, ducks, geese, spoonbills, terns, storks and others too numerous to mention. Kifaru followed along the edge of the lake to the western side of the crater and, skirting the foot of steep slopes, came to where a large colony of lions had their dens. Several of the great tawny beasts were lying about enjoying a sun-bath, and with them were four cubs playing about like kittens. This was an unpleasant discovery, as it meant that she must keep a look-out at all times, for lions are fond of rhino meat and will, if opportunity offers, attack a young one. But in a country where other and more easily and safely killed game exists in such abundance there would not be very much to fear. All things considered, the place was as perfect as anything could be, and Kifaru settled down to enjoy life and forget men and their death-inflicting rifles and spears.

With the passing of time her young one grew,

slowly but surely, and became more and more independent; it was not, however, until he was about half the size of his mother, and must have weighed nearly three-quarters of a ton, that he gave up taking nourishment from her. It seemed absurd to see this large creature, whose horns were well developed, coming to his mother for milk. Had he been left alone, the chances are that he would have been able to live without his mother within a year of his birth, but as long as she was with him he relied on her, to a gradually lessening degree, until he was probably two or three years old.

For many years the pair of rhino lived undisturbed in the crater. Occasionally during the heavy rains they made their way up to the rolling plateaux above, where the ground was drier, but never for long were they away from their favourite country. On one of these occasions they met an old bull, a fine animal with immense horns, thicker, but not so long as Kifaru's, and with the peculiarity that the front horn was fully six inches shorter than the back one. Apparently he was lonely, for he had lived a long time alone in and near the bamboo forests which clothed one of the mountains above the crater. The old fellow took quite a fancy to Kifaru, but objected strongly to her son, who was now a well-grown animal. The result of this objection was that the old bull

made it so plain that two was company and three a crowd, that the younger one was forced by somewhat vigorous methods of persuasion to start life for himself or do whatever he liked, so long as he made himself scarce. Being a sensible animal, he accepted the situation with true philosophy, after having felt the points of the old bull's sturdy horns, backed by a couple of tons weight, and off he went to roam the country and perhaps find a mate for himself. Such is the way of wild creatures. Kifaru and the old bull returned to the crater after the end of the rainy season and together lived a peaceful life for about a year; then the family was increased by one, a small imitation of his large parents. This little fellow nearly met with an untimely end before he was two weeks old. He was sleeping peacefully late one afternoon when a pair of lionesses desirous of enjoying a change of diet thought the baby rhino would prove a toothsome morsel. With great care they stalked the little fellow, but, as luck would have it, Kifaru got wind of the hunters just as they were about to rush forward, and, with a speed and agility surprising in an animal of her size and weight, she went for them with such vigour that they narrowly escaped being impaled on her long horn. Her mate, seeing what was taking place, came to her help and chased the pair away, while the mother, who had been almost tempted to leave her youngster,

came quickly to him and stood by in case the lions returned. It has been said that lions will occasionally attract a mother animal's attention and coax her away and then double back and seize the helpless young. Whether there is any truth in this, it is difficult to say, but their cleverness is so remarkable that one can believe almost anything of them, and the most far-fetched stories may be true.<sup>1</sup>

The long period of peace which Kifaru had enjoyed in the crater was finally ended by the advent of man, whose very presence in most cases seems to be a disturbance to the lives of wild animals. In this instance the abnormal conditions caused by the Great War were responsible for what happened. Food had become a great problem for those who were fighting in Africa. All sources of supply had to be tapped, and among these sources were the vast herds of wildebeest which thronged the crater. In order to collect and dry the meat, many men took up their abode in the vicinity, and porters who carried out these supplies

<sup>1</sup> It is never safe to discredit even the strangest tales; for example, we have always been told that lions will invariably fight desperately for their cubs regardless of the odds against them. In general this is probably true, yet I have held a cub scarcely as large as a small spaniel in the hope of having the parents come near enough to allow me to photograph them. They both heard the cries of the little fellow, who fought like a demon, and came several times to see what was going on. Yet they refused to approach closer than about a hundred and fifty yards. Several times they appeared, but never made any effort to rescue their young one. This story is against all that we have been taught and sounds fantastic, yet it is absolutely true.—AUTHOR.

had to be fed. *Posho* of all kinds was difficult to obtain; the result was that an animal as large as a rhino was a prize much sought after. Kifaru and her mate were greatly concerned when they became aware of the unwelcome visitors, and for several days hoped in vain that their stay would not be for long. To avoid the risk of encountering their enemies the rhino abandoned the open feeding-grounds during the day-time and kept in or near the swamp which bordered the eastern part of the lake. Many shots disturbed the quiet of the crater during those days, and at nights when out feeding the air was filled with the odour of death and fire, to say nothing of men. Evidently the place was no longer a land of peace and happiness and the sooner they escaped the better. Thus it happened that within two weeks after man's invasion of the neighbourhood the rhino family, under cover of darkness, made their way with reluctance up the steep slopes of the south-western part of the great crater. The trail they followed led through a dense primeval forest and then across a large open space of rolling grass-covered country on towards where the bamboo forest clothed the mountain-side. For a day or two they remained there, but the sound of long lines of men passing near by was so disconcerting that they determined to strike out through the bamboos and across a region of rocks and rough hills until at last

they came to a vast tract of forest where they seemed safe from their enemy. Buffalo and elephant had their home in this region, where food and water were abundant. Here they lived, wandering about in a restless way before settling on a particular locality for their home. In the course of these wanderings they came upon the tracks of natives, but for a long time they were free from the actual scent of man. It was while making their way along an animal trail to a waterhole where they expected to enjoy a refreshing wallow that trouble came to the trio. Usually Kifaru led the way with her calf close behind her and the old bull following, but, as ill luck would have it, on this particular day the calf was walking ahead as the older ones stopped repeatedly to browse; suddenly the ground gave way beneath the little fellow's feet and he fell with a sickening thud into a deep game-pit, the bottom of which was planted with strong, sharply pointed stakes. The sound of the fall and the groan of pain as the stakes cut through the skin and entered the body of the wretched creature aroused Kifaru, who came quickly to see where her young one had gone, and stopped abruptly on the edge of the pit, in which she saw the wretched calf struggling vainly to free himself from the cruel spikes. She rushed about in a hopeless manner, accompanied by her mate, but there was nothing she could do, and after several hours of

impotent rage and distress she stood by while her calf died. After that she seemed unable to tear herself away and wandered about, returning each time to the scene of the tragedy. Early the following morning, while she and her mate were still there, the sound of voices broke the death-like stillness of the forest. Instantly Kifaru was alert. Instinctively she backed into the cover of the bushes with the old bull by her side, and together they waited and watched. Soon a party of partly naked natives came in sight. The very sight of men aroused Kifaru to a pitch of uncontrollable anger. Without a moment's hesitation she launched her attack directly at the oncoming men, whose surprise was so great that they scarcely knew what to do, and before they had made up their minds Kifaru, followed closely by the bull, dashed among the bewildered natives, knocking some down, throwing others aside and tossing one unfortunate fellow in the air. All was confusion for the space of a few seconds, but the two rhino, who were little the worse for a few slight spear wounds, apparently content with the havoc they had wrought, did not stop to continue the fight, but turned off the trail and were soon lost in the shadows of the forest, while the natives were left to take care of themselves as best they could. Enough of them were uninjured to haul the young rhino out of the pit, but in spite of the feast they were to have, it was a sadder

if not wiser party of men that left for their village, which was a dozen miles or more away. For many years after this event, when the country was once more in peace, Kifaru remained alone in the forest, as her mate had been shot by a white hunter, and she developed a temper that made her a terror to all who visited the neighbourhood. She was known as the "rhino that charged", and wise men left her severely alone whenever they could; but she had a habit of hiding herself in the dense bushes near a trail and suddenly rushing at any passer-by without the least warning. Some hardy sportsmen, thinking themselves clever, tried to get her, but she was too cunning for even the best of them, and it was no uncommon thing for them to return with sad stories of their misfortunes. The old creature had had her life embittered by disaster and she bore a grudge against mankind in general. No longer would she trust herself in open country where her enemy would have the advantage; the densest forest was her home, and though not truly a forest rhino,<sup>1</sup> she became one by force of circumstances. Adversity and persecution form the habits of animals.

<sup>1</sup> There are two varieties of the black rhino which, though similar in form, are distinct in habits: those of the plains or open country and those of the forest. Of the two the latter are by far the more dangerous. With the increased persecution to which these rather stupid creatures are subjected, it is more than likely that within a few years the only ones that will survive will be those who abandon the plains and make their homes in the dense forest. How long even they will continue to exist is a matter of speculation.—  
AUTHOR.

They learn by experience, though sometimes not quickly enough to save the species from extermination. Kifaru had learned her lesson, dearly enough it is true, but still she had learned it, and so she continued to live her solitary life in the virgin forest, far from man, where other great beasts such as the buffalo and elephant seek seclusion and safety. How many years she will continue to roam the dark, shaded trails no one can tell, for her allotted span of life is still unknown to us. The end will come when one day Kifaru will lie down and not be able to rise, and her body will live again in the trees and bushes which gave her shelter and sanctuary during the last years of her long life.

TWIGER, THE GIRAFFE, AND CO.



## TWIGER, THE GIRAFFE, AND CO.

ON the brow of a low hill, grass-covered and as golden as a field of ripened wheat, a soft, feathery thorn tree was silhouetted against the brilliant yellow early morning sky. Standing close to the tree was Twiger,<sup>1</sup> the Giraffe. She was enjoying her breakfast of leaves from the topmost branches of the flat-topped tree.

Not far away, among the scattered trees, other giraffe, to the number of two dozen or more, were engaged on the same important task. The tall, graceful creatures, so different from all others, formed a picture at once beautiful and truly African, for in Africa alone is the giraffe found, and in Kenya Colony, the wonderland of wild animals where this scene is laid, they are, to-day, more numerous than in any part of Africa. Nearly all other animals found in this great continent have their cousins, which they resemble more or less closely, in other parts of the world. The elephant, the rhino, the buffalo, the lion and many

<sup>1</sup> The name by which the giraffe is known in East Africa is pronounced *Tweejer*.

more are but variations of the species found elsewhere. Not so the giraffe; he stands alone in his strange beauty and is purely African; in some ways the most handsome of all creatures, and certainly one of the most unusual in form and colour, a survivor of the ages that have passed. Seen in their own home, they seem to fit their natural surroundings to perfection and to add beauty and interest to the landscape to a degree that is unapproached by any creature. They are a picture in themselves.

Twiger was a full-grown cow giraffe in the prime of life. She stood about seventeen feet in height, her neck, from the body to the top of her head, being approximately one-half of her total height. The neck was ridged by a blackish mane several inches in length and extending to the shoulders. In colour she was a fairly deep chestnut divided into irregular patches by a very clearly defined network of white lines, for she belonged to the species known as the reticulated giraffe, whose home is north of the equator in the more eastern part of Kenya. She had many distant cousins in other parts of Africa; most of them had more blotchy marking, without the distinct white borders, and were not so dark in colour. Twiger possessed two short stubby horns somewhat soft and covered with skin and hair, also a knob or make-believe horn in the middle of her forehead. It was as though a

third one had started to grow and after reaching a height of an inch or two had given up the attempt as hopeless. In this way she again differed from some of her cousins, who had various ideas on the subject of horns and grew three or four or even more. Her face, somewhat reminiscent of her very distant relation the sheep, narrows very quickly towards the nose with its highly situated nostrils (caused by the slightly prehensile upper lip). But the crowning features of the face are the eyes, so large, dark and almost liquid in appearance, made more beautiful by the very long black eyelashes. Surely no animal has more perfect eyes. Twiger's feet were double-hoofed, somewhat like those of a cow, and she possessed a long tail which reached almost to the ground and was tufted with long black wavy hair. As an ornament it was fairly successful, but its chief use was as a fly "swatter" and it served its purpose most admirably. Twiger was an animal who loved company, and she lived a life of harmony with the rest of the herd, who were the quietest of all animals, rarely, if ever, making any vocal sound.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the handsome, peaceful animal who enjoyed her breakfast on this perfect African morning.

<sup>1</sup> Although I have seen many hundred giraffe I have never heard any one of them make the slightest sound. There have been, however, two or three instances reported by other observers of the animals making a very slight sort of grunt.—AUTHOR.

The rest of the herd consisted of several large bulls, somewhat more heavily built in the neck and shoulders than the cows, and taller, for they reached the great height of about eighteen or nineteen feet. There were a few younger bulls, but the larger part of the herd were cows of varying ages, and among them all was a marked variation in colour. Some were so dark that they seemed almost black and white, while others ranged from this deep chestnut brown to orange-fawn, some being fairly light. All, whether young or old, carried the curious knob-like horns, and all were beautiful.

While the sun rose high in the heavens Twiger and her friends continued to feed, and not until it was nearly noon were their appetites satisfied. Having enjoyed the combined breakfast and lunch, the next requirement was a drink, for the day was becoming hot, and it being the dry season the leaves they had eaten contained very little moisture. The nearest waterhole in this parched country was several miles away, and under the leadership of an old bull the herd started. A stately cavalcade they were, walking in the dignified way which is characteristic of the species, the two legs on either side of the body being moved simultaneously, while the head and neck, held slightly forward, move back and forth with each long step. The speed, which appears to be slow, is in reality

fairly rapid; probably not less than seven miles per hour.

On arriving at a point on a slight rise in the ground, from which the waterhole was visible perhaps half a mile away, the herd stopped and Twiger was sent ahead to see that all was safe. She moved slowly forward, stopping frequently to look about her. She had wonderful eyesight and with her long neck her head was so far from the ground that she could see a great distance. Each time she stopped she examined the surrounding country with the utmost care. The small rock-bound waterhole reflecting the sky shone like a blue mirror set in the yellow-grey landscape, and round the water she saw many animals drinking and feeding. This was a good sign, but still the greatest caution must be observed and nothing could be taken for granted. Man might be hidden in any one of the low bushes and there was always the chance that his one object might be to shoot giraffe. If this were the case, he would not disturb the herds of other animals, for he would know well enough that their presence would tend to calm the suspicions of the giraffe.

Twiger did not propose to be caught napping, for the lives of the herd depended on her care. She was approaching the waterhole up-wind, which is always the safer way, but even so she would not trust entirely

to her sense of smell, acute though it was. When within a few hundred yards of the pool she came to a clump of bushes in the midst of which was a thorn tree of medium height. Here she decided to hide for a short time while she watched. Standing close to the tree the bushes almost concealed her body and her long neck might easily have been mistaken for a tree-trunk. For half an hour she remained motionless and inconspicuous, not so much from her colour, which some people think, probably quite wrongly, is given to her for protective reasons,<sup>1</sup> as from the fact that she did not move. Immobility is the greatest factor in concealment and counts for far more than colour, whether plain or in a pattern, and this is known to the giraffe as well as it is to elephant and other animals; so Twiger kept as still as the tree near which she stood and continued her careful scrutiny of the waterhole and its vicinity until at last she was satisfied that it was safe to approach a little nearer. She watched the various animals drinking and feeding, and beyond the usual nervous sudden raising of heads and testing of the wind for danger scents they appeared to feel a reasonable sense of security.

The waterhole was situated in a district far from the haunts of man and only on very rare occasions was

<sup>1</sup> See further discussion on the subject of protective colouring and markings, p. 1 *et seq.*

it disturbed by human visitors. Those that came were usually natives on their way to fish in the river, which was only a few miles away, or to hunt hippo.

It is a strange fact that animals almost always prefer a waterhole to a river, the reason being that the rivers contain crocodiles, which are a source of great danger to all creatures except perhaps elephant. Even a rhino has been known to have been caught while drinking by a very large crocodile,<sup>1</sup> while the smaller animals fall easy prey to the great beasts, which lie concealed in the water and seize their victims as they put their heads down to drink.

After a long time of watching Twiger, to make absolutely certain that all was well, walked slowly round the pool, first in a large circle, then closer, and finally, satisfied that no enemy was lurking among the low clumps of thorn bush, she came to the edge of the water and began to drink. In order to do this it was necessary to spread her front legs far apart so that she could reach the level of the water. It was not a graceful attitude, but unavoidable, for though her neck was of great length, her legs were also so long that without lowering her body by spreading them apart she could not bring her head low enough.

The giraffe seems to be one of nature's strange

<sup>1</sup> Several photographs were made, showing the struggle which took place and ended in the unfortunate rhino being dragged by the nose into deep water and drowned.—AUTHOR.

jokes which forces the animal to assume such an awkward position when it wishes to drink; but in all probability there has been a great change in the vegetation of the country since the giraffe developed its remarkably long neck, and it would seem reasonable to suppose that in the past there were trees with water-containing leaves, so that drinking from pools was not necessary. Now these trees have vanished, but the giraffe retains his curious form, which results in the almost grotesque acrobatic feats performed when drinking.

Twiger, having satisfied her thirst, walked back a short distance from the pool and, looking towards the patiently waiting herd, intimated to them that the place was safe and that they might come. No second invitation was necessary. Some walked and others, more thirsty than their companions, galloped in their haste to reach the water. It was not long before they all arrived and the pool was surrounded by the handsome creatures. Having drunk their fill, they wandered about among the other animals and seemed reluctant to leave the vicinity of the water. One or two even fed on the low-growing plants among the grass.

The whole scene was one of Africa's masterpieces, a picture to be found nowhere else in the world of to-day, for besides the herd of giraffe there were a



A PICTURE TO BE FOUND NOWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD OF TO DAY



number of Grévy zebra, the most beautiful of the family, with their well-shaped bodies so delicately marked with fine dark stripes, their black-muzzled long faces and large rounded ears and upright striped manes. Among them were their smaller cousins, the common Grant's zebra, less finely built and with broader dark stripes. There were a score or so of oryx with their long, straight, rapier-like horns, their soft dove-coloured bodies marked so strangely, with black stripes on their faces, sides and legs. Among these were some Grant's gazelles, delicately and beautifully made, light orange-buff in colour with more or less dark bands on the sides and white flanks marked with vertical black stripes. The males bore large gracefully curved horns, while the females had smaller ones. Also there were a few of their close relations, the little Thompson's gazelles, or Tommies, as they are usually called, almost counterparts of the Grant's on a smaller scale. A herd of hartebeest completed the list of antelopes, strange creatures with long narrow faces crowned with curiously curved horns, high shoulders and drooping flanks—the sentries of the country, who seem to watch over the welfare of all animals and warn them of approaching danger. Besides all these, a family of wart-hogs added their grotesque forms to this natural zoo. The old ones have faces that can only be described as caricatures,

with their long, curved, protruding tusks and strange wart-like excrescences beneath the eyes. Though their faces are so unfortunately ugly their bodies are well built, grey in colour, with long, stiff, bristling manes and tufted tails held straight in the air when they run. This was the wonderful assortment of animals which, with the giraffe, went to make up the picture of the waterhole. Of bird life there was but little; only a few plover and several varieties of doves and a greater bustard. In the distance a flock of ostrich could be seen, the cock birds in their striking black and white dress and long red necks, while the hens, like the females of most birds, were content with a sombre grey.

For an hour or two after the giraffe arrived the various animals remained within a short distance of the waterhole and then gradually they wandered off to feed, for the heat of the day had passed. Twiger and her companions made their way very leisurely towards a low valley, where there were many large thorn trees. As they went they stopped at every tree or bush they passed and selected the choicest leaf-covered twigs. All these trees and bushes were covered with thorns, not only straight thorns such as are common in most countries, but thorns shaped like cat's claws and pointing in all directions; they are well named "wait-a-bit", for to touch one is to be

caught, and to struggle for freedom is to become hopelessly imprisoned until twig by twig they are cut away and one escapes to find one's clothes ripped and one's skin torn in a cruel way. Not even a barbed-wire entanglement can be compared to a really well-developed wait-a-bit thorn bush. Once I had a mule whose one single object in life seemed to be to land me in a thorn bush. With a cleverness that was uncanny he would select the bush with the greatest number of thorns. Not that he ever appeared to take the slightest notice of such things as he walked or occasionally—I might say very occasionally—trotted, when suddenly, without the slightest warning, as he passed the bush of his desire he would back with incredible speed and force me into the millions of thorns; when I was thoroughly caught he would bound forward and I would leave much of my clothing and skin on the pitiless thorns. So, knowing something about these vegetable cat-claws, one cannot help wondering how it is that the giraffe are able to eat them without injury to their long prehensile tongues or to their mouths and insides; it is a mystery that seems impossible of solution. The giraffe eventually reached their destination, and, distributing themselves among the trees, proceeded to take their meal from the highest branches, where the leaves were apparently most to their liking. The feeding continued until

shortly after sunset, when they drew together and, standing, slept until the first gleam of dawn brightened the sky.

The following day Twiger, leaving her companions, found a secluded place among the bushes and there gave birth to her first calf, a quaint little fellow composed chiefly of legs and neck, marked like his mother and having tiny stub-like horns covered with hair. In his proportions he differed to a marked degree from his parent, his legs being very much longer than his neck, where with the adult the neck is longer than the legs. He was well developed and within a very short time was able to accompany his tall mother when she returned to the herd. With all these big animals around him he must have felt remarkably small. He did not, however, go near any of them, but remained close by his mother, following her wherever she went. Thanks to that instinct, so strong in all wild creatures, she knew that the little fellow was in constant danger from lion, which, beside man, is about the only enemy that giraffe have to fear. Crocodiles they need not worry about, as it is only on the rarest occasions that they ever drink at a river, preferring small waterholes in open country where they can keep a good look-out over the surroundings. But lions are fond of the meat of young giraffe and will even risk an attempt to catch them, though they

must realise the danger they run from the mother's kick. With the great length of the leg the leverage is terrific, and the sharp hoofs become a weapon that might easily be deadly even to so strong an animal as a lion. Few mothers are more solicitous for the welfare of their young. They watch them continually and spend a lot of time licking their bodies with their long tongues. This habit continues even when grown up, so that among the herd licking is a common practice. Whether this is due to the queer-smelling and probably salty exudation of the skin or as a caress it is not possible to say with certainty.

The young giraffe was a playful little fellow and he developed and strengthened his muscles by romping about in a ridiculous way, sometimes attempting to jump or skip after the manner of a lamb or kid. Later on in his young life another calf was added to the number of the herd, and when it was strong enough the two used to play together in a most amusing way.

Practically all young and many fully grown wild animals indulge in games, some of which are not unlike those that are played by children. Even the stately oryx, which is one of the heavier antelope, will play a game of chasing each other round a bush, a dozen or more taking part in the game. It is a sort of musical chairs, for while trotting or cantering round, one will make a sudden turn in the opposite

direction, whereupon all must follow, and this goes on for a long time, until one by one they drop out; whether according to some rule or simply because they are tired, one cannot say.

The country where the herd of giraffe lived was seldom visited by man, but with the increase in the number of shooting parties as the country became better known their peace was destined to be disturbed, for the hunters were always searching for new ground. So it happened that one day, when the herd was resting in the shade of a grove of large thorn trees, the giraffe who was on duty caught sight of four men walking across the open plains about half a mile away.

It may be noted that probably no animal has better eyesight than a giraffe, and they seem to trust to this even more than to their hearing or their sense of smell. Perhaps it is because being so tall scent is carried below their head. Whatever the reason may be, it is almost certain that their eyesight is their chief means of protection.

The sentry, an old bull, seeing the men, observed that they were heading more or less towards him, gave the alarm, and immediately the herd left the shelter of the trees and moved away in single file to the brow of a fairly high hill which commanded an uninterrupted view of the surrounding plains. Once there, they seemed to feel more at ease, for nothing could approach

them unseen. The men, who were new to the country, had the strange idea that to shoot a giraffe was something to be proud of, something to boast about to their friends at home, though with what justification it is difficult to discover. With ordinary care the animals are easily stalked to within shooting range. They are easily killed, for if disabled in any way they soon give up, because, owing to their build, they require full power to enable them to walk, and when they once fall they cannot rise; they are in fact one of the most pathetically helpless of animals, and when they are killed what purpose is served? They have no great horns like the buffalo or even some of the antelope, no grand maned head like the lion, to be kept as trophies for those who enjoy having such souvenirs of their prowess as hunters. In fact, they yield no trophy worth considering, and yet men will shoot them for sport! Fortunately the feeling against killing these beautiful and practically harmless creatures is becoming more widespread, and most real sportsmen will not harm them, as they feel, quite rightly, that they are so much more interesting alive than dead. The pot-hunter, the man who makes money out of the slaughter of wild beasts, is a more difficult person to influence. To him the only consideration is that a giraffe skin is worth so much money, whether for sole leather, especially for sandals, or for the long

whips used in driving oxen. It was this latter reason that was chiefly responsible for the destruction of the giraffe in South Africa, where oxen were so largely used for transport work, and the long whip was consequently so much in demand. To-day these market-hunters are taken care of with increasingly good results by the game department, which deals with any breach of the law in a way that is highly discouraging to these killers.

Twiger and her friends had not the slightest intention of being shot. They kept the hunters in view every moment; when they disappeared behind a hill, the watchers moved their position so that they could follow the movements of the men, and when at last they vanished among some trees which marked the course of a dry river-bed, the giraffe considered that it was time to be off to another district twenty miles or more away.

This new home was on the edge of a great rolling plain which stretched for unknown miles to the north. On the southern side it was bordered by a forest-covered range of mountains, and among the trees there were open grassy spaces. In these the giraffe spent many hours feeding on the succulent leaves of the surrounding trees which overhung the grass. To reach these secluded parts they followed elephant and buffalo trails through the forest and somehow they

seemed strangely out of place in these shaded paths, for they are always associated with open country, where the trees or bushes are more or less scattered. Unquestionably they are safer in such country, and this was proved before long. Probably the older giraffe knew that by keeping in or even near the forest they were running a risk, but the temptation of the abundant rich food was too strong to be resisted.

It so happened that the party of hunters whom they had eluded only a few weeks before had come to this forest in the hope of finding either elephant or buffalo, and one day when making their way along a trail through the great trees they noticed among the buffalo tracks many of an unusually large size. Excited at the thought of finding the biggest buffalo ever known, these somewhat inexperienced sportsmen followed the giraffe tracks, and, coming at last to where one of the clearings showed through the trees, were very much surprised to see the herd of giraffe feeding on the farther side. They did not, however, notice that but a few yards away, standing at the edge of the forest, was Twiger with her calf by her side. She was not conspicuous, silhouetted as she was against the light, as her long neck looked much like a tree-trunk while her body was more or less concealed by the lower growth of the bushes, and the calf was hidden completely by the mother's body. The men were

surprised at finding that their giant buffalo were in reality giraffe, as they never expected to see these animals of the plains in such surroundings. They consulted together as to what they had better do; the near-by giraffe, having become somewhat suspicious owing to a faint whiff of the strange odour of man, stopped feeding and was peering through the tangled branches; listening attentively she soon caught the sound of low voices and then saw the men. No more was needed. In a second the great body was in motion and she galloped across the clearing to a trail she knew which led out of the forest. The rest of the herd, having taken alarm, followed immediately, and they all disappeared before the sportsmen realised what was happening.

After this the giraffe avoided the forest and its glades which had so nearly proved fatal to one or more of their number. The plains were safer, even though the food was neither so palatable nor so abundant, and the search for browse among the scattered thorn trees compelled them to move frequently. It was in the course of one of these foraging trips that they came to a road, the first they had seen. The word road is used for lack of a better term, as it was actually little more than a path across the plains from which bushes and stones had been removed where necessary and the ground made more or less smooth

and grassless by the passage of motor and ox transport. Along this roadway the giraffe walked for a time, wondering what it meant. Then coming to some thorn bushes they turned aside to feed. Before long they heard the sound of a strange creature shrieking in the distance. They were familiar with the calls of the various wild creatures inhabiting the country, but this was something entirely new, and, wondering, they turned round and listened. Soon a curious roar, as though of water in a deep ravine or very remote thunder, sounded, dimly at first but gradually increasing in volume, until at last, followed by a cloud of yellow dust, a motor appeared. It seemed to be chasing them and the herd started to gallop, followed by the noisy car. Before long, to their dismay, it came abreast of them and they increased their speed, so that they were going as fast as the strange thing that kept to the road, which was perhaps a hundred yards to one side of them. Their gallop is fast, but scarcely graceful, as the whole body, or rather the neck, sways back and forth with each step. It is a sort of three-and-one action; that is to say, one front foot is on the ground while the other three are raised, then in quick succession the other front foot comes to earth, followed almost immediately by the two hind feet; in its speed the motion is very deceptive for the animals cover the ground extraordinarily fast, and all the time they are

galloping the long tail is swung across the back, usually to the left. For a mile or two the race continued without either side gaining; several times the car gave forth terrible screeches, and this frightened the giraffe. Then, as they began to tire, instead of turning away from their pursuer they made a dash towards it with increased speed and galloped across directly in front of the car, some of them clearing it by scarcely ten yards. Seeing that the roaring monster did not turn towards them, the giraffe, after going a couple of hundred yards, slowed down and finally stopped and stared at the car, which in its cloud of following dust was soon out of sight. What the motor was, or whether it was a dangerous monster, the bewildered animals did not know. To them it was simply a new creature more or less connected with human beings, for they found on returning to the road that mixed with various strange and awful smells was the scent of man.<sup>1</sup>

The strange broad trail, which was evidently made by the fearsome monsters, was an undesirable neighbourhood for animals, so the giraffe walked off to the east to find a place where they would be safe, and they

<sup>1</sup> This curious habit of giraffe accompanying a car and then almost invariably crossing in front of it, regardless of its speed, is well known, and like so many of the habits of wild creatures is most difficult to explain. Unfortunately, and be it said to their shame, men have been known to take advantage of this habit to shoot the wretched animals, and so proving that they were a disgrace to their name as sportsmen.—AUTHOR.

came to a district where game of many kinds was abundant and where there was a series of good water-holes; altogether a desirable place and here they remained for a year or two without interruption. During this time a mixed herd of zebra and oryx usually stayed with them. They drank together and wandered about the tree-scattered plains in perfect harmony. But conditions changed with the passing of the months. The rainy season proved a failure, for after a few showery days no more rain fell, and the tender green leaves and grass which had begun to appear soon dried up and the whole country became parched and arid. Even the waterholes showed signs of drying, and, to make matters worse, vast numbers of camels and cattle were brought to the place and occupied the drinking-places, so that the wild animals were driven away.

The herd of giraffe, which by this time had increased to nearly three dozen, followed the example of the other creatures, who scattered and went off in search of water in different directions. The old bull who led the herd decided, after trying many places without success, to go back to the neighbourhood of the forest. There he knew water was to be found, though it was in the vicinity of man, which meant that a sharp look-out must be kept at all times. Travelling by day and night, allowing time for feeding and sleeping,

the journey occupied the best part of perhaps eight or ten days, during which time very little water was found, and the animals, though not frequent drinkers, suffered greatly from thirst; consequently most of the travelling was done during the cool of the night and the early morning.

In the course of the trek a strange thing happened. One morning, shortly before dawn, they were crossing a stretch of open country where trees were scarce, when suddenly the leader was stopped very abruptly by something drawn across his throat. There was nothing to be seen, yet the obstruction checked the surprised animal. Twiger, who with her grown-up calf was next to the leader, saw that there was something amiss, but before she could stop she also was held up by the invisible bar. Frightened by this unaccountable barrier the leader and Twiger turned back, to the surprise of the others, who, following their example, also turned, and all together they had galloped back some distance before they swung round to continue their journey, still at a fast speed and in close formation. Before they had gone far, the front animals were hit in the neck and almost thrown, but the next instant the barrier gave way with the impact of the other giraffe and they were able to proceed without further hindrance. What was said about the affair by those in charge of maintaining telegraph lines

in Kenya can be well imagined. The nearest repair station was many miles away and the whole line would have to be examined. If there is any body of men in Kenya who hate the very name of giraffe it is those who are responsible for keeping the wires in repair, and one can scarcely blame them for wishing the abolition of all protection for the long-necked creatures. The game department receives constant complaints, consequently there is at times a feeling of bitterness between the two departments and some rather curious official correspondence results, such as something to the effect that as the game department cannot possibly shorten the giraffes' necks, the telegraph department had better increase the length of the poles. Probably all will come right in time. Animals learn by experience, and when they find that wires are run across certain districts they will keep away.

The whole question of wild animals in their relation to man and his works is a difficult one. Farming is necessary if the country is to progress, and farming does not always combine happily with the wild animals. Zebra are particularly troublesome, as they so often stampede through fences and injure the crops. So it is that the wild creatures are being forced farther and farther away from their old haunts, with results that only the future can answer. Fortunately for the giraffe their habits are extremely good;

they seldom trouble farms, and if they could only be persuaded to duck their heads when they come to telegraph wires, their popularity would be more assured.

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THE END

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